

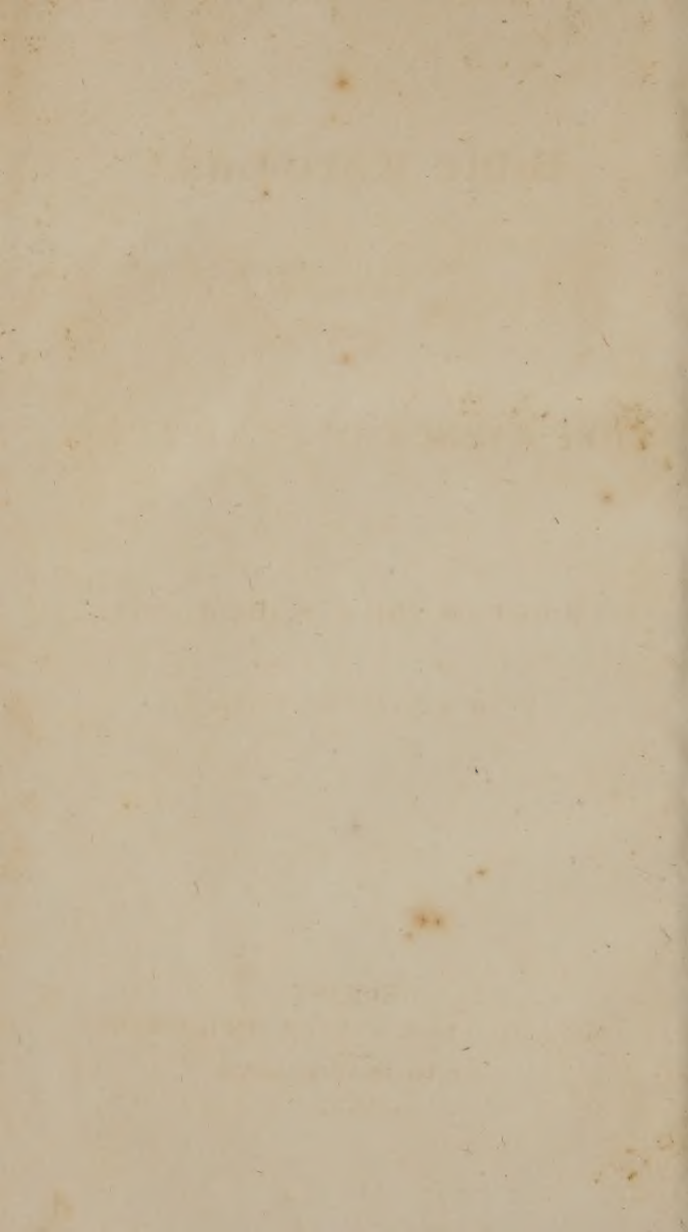




BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA







THE
Bible Christian:

DESIGNED TO ADVOCATE

THE
SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE,

AND THE
RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT,

IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

VOL. III.

BELFAST:
PUBLISHED BY S. ARCHER, HIGH-STREET.

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1832.

THE

WISDOM OF CHRISTIANITY

IN THE

SUPREMACY OF SCRIPTURE

AND

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT

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THE
Bible Christian.

No. I.

FEBRUARY, 1831.

VOL. II.

WE willingly commence the first Number of our Second Volume, with an Essay by our esteemed Correspondent "Philalethes." It has been delayed longer than we wished; but we were prevented from inserting it by various causes, until it was too late to have it entire in our last Volume; and therefore we deferred it until the beginning of the present.

ESSAY,

On the Knowledge of "The only true God," as "reconciling the World unto himself," by the Son of his love.

FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know THEE, the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent."—John xvii. 3.

MR. EDITOR,

Sir,—I think you will agree with me, that it is equal surprize and regret, that a period of 1800 years should have elapsed since the first promulgation of *the only true system of theology*, in the divinely accredited Gospel of human Salvation, by the Son of God himself; and that, at the end of that extensive space of time, the Christian World, with a special revelation of that system in its hand, should not be able to agree upon the first and fundamental principles of all theology as their guide to a true and acceptable worship of "the only true God:" yet such you well know is the equally strange and lamentable fact.

And, Sir, it is certain that this fact either involves the credit of the Christian revelation, and impeaches the veracity as well as the perspicuity of its divine author; or it demonstrates the obstinate prejudice, deplorable ignorance, and inflexible perversion of truth, that must exist in some, and those *not a few*, members of the numerous sects and parties into which the Christian world is now unhappily divided. We need not hesitate about

fixing the stigma of this reproach upon its proper object: the fault cannot lie with the God of truth and love; nor will it be found in that revelation of himself, and of his only begotten Son, which HE hath commissioned his Holy Spirit—emphatically called “the Spirit of Truth,”—to give to man, as his unerring guide to Salvation, through the experimental knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ; for HE is therein declared to be the *Son*, the *wisdom*, and the *power* of God, manifested in the flesh; which characters are fully confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. The fault, therefore, must rest with the ignorance, the instability, and the perversion of the human mind.

Under this baneful influence the truth of God has been so far obscured, and the first principles of theology perverted, that, however the fact may be attempted to be disguised, the real question at issue between the present contending parties is, whether there be *one* or *three* supreme Gods in the Universe. For, Sir, the advocates of the Trinitarian scheme, while they confess that their complex hypothesis recognizes but *one* God, do, *bona fide*, assert the co-existence of *three* Gods; for, to a man, they maintain the co-existence, as *distinct persons*, of GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Ghost—words which can have no meaning, unless they indicate supreme Godhead of *each* distinct person—a position which necessarily involves a plurality of Gods.—But if, on the other hand, they assert, that it requires the composition, or hypostatical union of the three persons to constitute the *one* GOD, then they make that God a *compound being*, and deny the Deity of each distinct person which enters into his composition. I shall hereafter endeavour to shew, that these principles are equally absurd and irrational; derogatory to the character of the Deity, and contradictory to the express testimony of Divine revelation; and, consequently, that they cannot be true: while I trust, the real truth of God, as revealed in his Holy Word, and confirmed, (if such confirmation were necessary,) by the testimony of reason, will appear to every enlightened and unprejudiced mind as clear and as bright as the noonday sun.

In this discussion, Sir, let us, in the first place, investigate the claim of the popular doctrine of the constitution of the Deity, by the union of three distinct persons

in one being, to the assumed character of "Orthodoxy," i. e. of *divinely accredited truth*, with which its advocates have dignified it. That there is but *one God*, and that this God is but *one being*, appear to be fundamental principles in which all parties are nominally and professedly agreed. One party, however, contends, that this unity is a composition of the energies of *three persons*, whose attributes are ineffably blended into the constitution of one all-perfect and omnipotent being, whose presence fills the universe; while the other party maintains, with equal tenacity, the opposing principle, that the supreme God is *one person*, i. e. one pure simple spirit; and if they acknowledge a trinity of persons, all participating in the possession of a common nature, which is essentially divine, they assert that two of those persons derive such portions thereof as they possess from the first and principal of the three.

It is easy to perceive, that, in a rational point of view, one important point upon which the decision of this question rests, is, whether or not the word *person*, in reference to the Trinity, implies a distinct, intelligent, and self-conscious being. If it does, then, as I conceive, the doctrine of a trinity of persons, hypostatically united in the constitution of one God, must necessarily fall to the ground;—it being a palpable contradiction in terms, as well as a violation of the first principles of intellectual and individual existence, to assert that any union of *three such beings* can ever constitute *one being*.*

Hence, we perceive the very precarious foundation on which the doctrine of the Trinity in unity is founded; for if it can be proved that any one of the persons, whose hypostatical conjunction is supposed to constitute the Godhead, possesses the common attributes of an intelligent being, that doctrine is confessedly insupportable. *Let its advocates remember this!*—Conscious of the weakness of their cause, and its incapacity to resist the united evidence of reason and matter of fact at this point, those

* The Rev. Richard Watson, in his *Theological Institutes*, while attempting to support the doctrine of the "Trinity in Unity," as the constitution of the one God, candidly acknowledges, that "if in this connexion, the word *person* were to be understood in its *true philosophical sense*, as implying "distinct beings, a plurality of Gods would necessarily follow from the equality of those persons." This is an unquestionable fact.

advocates shrink from *its* discussion, and assume, but without the possibility of a proof, the important, but degrading postulate, that no one of the persons in the Trinity is "a distinct being;" and, consequently, that even "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for ever more," and who was once worshipped by his incarnate Son, as "the only true God," does not possess the common attributes of a distinct, intelligent being; but is merely *a component part* of such a being! And the same deficiency is thereby asserted in reference to each person in the Divine Trinity.

The highest British authority, viz. that of the celebrated John Locke, fixes the true philosophical meaning of the word *person*, as implying *a thinking being, who knows its own peculiar identity of existence*; and this certainly is a just representation of the ideal meaning of the Greek word *hypostasis*, which is used by the inspired writers to designate the personal identity of the Deity.* But the evidences of the fact, that each person in the Trinity is an intellectual being, distinct from both the others, are not, by any means, limited to the meaning of a word; for the peculiar predicates recorded of the Son of God demonstrate, beyond the power of refutation, both his distinction from, and inferiority to the Father. For instance, it is essential to the constitution of one all-perfect, intelligent being, that he should have but *one will*; whereas there is direct evidence of *two wills* subsisting between the Father and the Son, in the declaration of the latter, recorded in JOHN, vi. 38, "For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."—And the circumstances to which the Son submitted, in consequence of that arrangement, fully confirm that distinction and inferiority; for it is certain that the supreme God is utterly incapable of location, of incarnation, of subjugation and obedience to superior authority; and to the operation of *a curse*, either in a vicarious, or in any other capacity. It was also impossible that HE should be the subject of temptation, or be placed in a state of probation; and, that after submitting to the penalty of death, he should be rewarded with an eternally increasing accession of glory, in testimony and

*Vide HEB. i. 3.

remuneration of his fidelity. But all these instances of humiliation the Son of God did submit to, in obedience to the *paramount will* of his God and Father, and hence it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the Son is both a distinct and an inferior being, when thus placed in juxta-position with the God of the universe.

But it was not necessary to have recourse even to those instances of humiliation in proof of the distinction and inferiority of the Son of God, in reference to his God and Father; for the very relation in which those two divine beings stand to each other, is a primary and conclusive evidence thereof. For, as common sense tells us that the relations of paternity and filiation can subsist only between distinct beings, so our enlightened reason assures us that in the act of paternity it was impossible for God to convey all the essential attributes of his nature to his offspring. For instance, the eternal, independent, and inherent self-possession of all-absolute and possible perfection is essential to God; but it is a palpable contradiction in terms to assert, that this can be communicated to, or possessed by a being who, like "the Son of God, derives both his existence and his essence from the *Father* :"* and unless he did so derive them, it is certain he could not be the *Son* of God.

Having thus established the fact, that the Son of God is a distinct being from the Father, of whom my motto declares, that he is "the only true God," it is not at all necessary to produce any other argument, except what arises out of that fact, in proof of his inferiority; for it is certain that no being can be *equal with God*, but God himself;† and accordingly we have the direct testimony of the Son of God himself, (could we

* This quotation is from Watson's Theological Institutes, vol. ii. page 37, who, in those very words, acknowledges the important fact they express.

† The authorized version of Philip. ii. 6: "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," contains a direct contradiction to John, xiv. 28: "My Father is greater than I." But the best modern commentators and critics agree in translating that passage,— "He was not ambitious of, or, he did not eagerly desire to be equal with God: (see Dr. Adam Clarke, *in loco*,) but as he was a being distinct from God, that equality, had he ever grasped at it, could only have been circumstantial and external, and, consequently, neither essential nor internal."

but esteem him worthy of credit!) in confirmation of his inferiority to the Father. In John, xiv. 28, he informs his disciples, as a source of their congratulation, that he was about to re-ascend to his Father; "for," he adds, "my Father is greater than I."

The advocates of the equality of the Son with the Father, in the constitution of the Godhead, aware of the decisive evidence of the last-quoted text against that equality, have resorted to a very weak and futile mode of evading its force, which it may be necessary here to notice, only for the purpose of refuting it. By them it is asserted, that the Lord Jesus Christ was a being composed of two spiritual natures, or beings, hypostatically united in the constitution of his character; as one compound person, both which natures, or spirits, being incorporated in the same body, this *tripartite* composition constituted the one complicated person, called *pro re nata*, a God or a man, or both, as the exigencies of their system required; one part of the composition being "the only true God," and the other *a created man!*

For all common purposes this composition was spoken of and regarded as but one being, the essences of the Creator and the creature being so blended and intermixed, by the assimilating powers of the "hypostatical union," that they constituted but "one personal Christ," which transformation, we are informed, was effected, "not by *converting the Godhead into flesh*, but by *taking the manhood into God!*"* It appears, however, that the "two natures" did not always *cordially coalesce*; a circumstance which sometimes militated against the identifying laws of the said hypostatical union, insomuch that the Christ himself either occasionally *forgot* or *disregarded* its effects; and on these occasions the advocates of the union assert that one part of himself spake of itself, as if it had been the whole, although it was in reality only one half of him!

Thus they tell us, that when our Redeemer once said, "I and my Father are one," (John x. 30.) he spake only in reference to *his divine nature*; whereas, when, on another occasion, he assured his disciples that *his Father was greater than he*, (John xiv. 28.) he alluded

* Athanasian Creed.

exclusively to *his human nature*.* It is obvious that in both these cases the assertion is a mere *petitio principii*, and is so far from being capable of proof, that there is the strongest evidence against it. That evidence is found, 1st, in the fact that the Scriptures give not the slightest hint of any such division of Christ; 2dly, in the duplicity, concealment, and misrepresentation, which it would involve, as attached to the immaculate character of the Saviour of the world; but of which he was utterly incapable. For, according to the statements of the "Orthodox" themselves, it required the union of both natures to constitute the Lord Jesus Christ; and consequently the one half of him could not be *himself*; nor could any predicate which was peculiar to one portion of him justify his asserting it generally of his whole Spiritual nature, which he evidently does when he uses the pronoun *I* in both the instances above quoted. It is also found, 3dly, in the *absurdity* that would attach to the idea of the Saviour of the world thus solemnly assuring his disciples of a fact, which *every child in Judea knew as well as he*, viz. that God was *greater than a man*! If, therefore, as those *Orthodox Divines* assert, Jesus Christ intended merely to inform his disciples, that "*as man* he was inferior to the Father," in the first place he ought to have told them so, but which he certainly did not; and secondly, if he had done so, it would have been a perfectly useless piece of information, as they could not be ignorant of the fact, that God was greater than man. But lastly, the evidence of the fallacy of this interpretation is found in the fact that God was the Father only of his divine nature; for David, Abraham, and Adam were the fathers of his flesh, and God alone was the Father of his Spirit; and God alone was greater than he; and HE was also *the Father*, to whom he was then about to return. When, therefore, Jesus Christ asserted that God, as *his Father*, was greater than he, all the rules of logic, and of theology, concur to prove that it was in *that nature of which God was the Father*, that HE, as his Father, was greater than the Son. And this must be the case; for if God, who unquestionably begat the Son, could thus produce a being, distinct from, yet in

* Watson's Theo. Inst., and almost all Orthodox Commentators.

all respects equal with, himself, as his powers of numerical production are unlimited, so the Almighty could, if he so pleased, upon this hypothesis, fill every spot of the universe with Gods equal with himself.

Among the other innumerable absurdities of such an hypothesis, this stands in the foremost rank,—that God could produce, by generation, an *underived*, and self-existent being; and bestow upon that being, the eternally inherent self-possession of infinite perfections equal with his own.

Gross as these absurdities are, they nevertheless constitute the fundamental basis of modern Orthodoxy; for one of the ablest advocates of that system of the present day, maintains, upon the authority of Bishops Bull and Searson, and Dr. Owen, that the true constitution of the Godhead, in the *Unitritinarian* doctrine, is, that as “the Father is the fountain of the Deity, so he *communicates the whole of the divine nature to the Son*; and that the Father and Son, in conjunction, communicate the same to the Holy Spirit.”* By this scheme the Father first exists alone, as the one sole possessor of Deity; then HE, secondly, produces the Son, into whom he infuses a Godhead equal with his own, which, however, he does not part with: the Son, being now equal with the Father, joins him, thirdly, in the production and deification of the Holy Spirit; and, the three being now equal co-partners in the Godhead, are, both separately and conjointly, each and all the one only supreme God of the universe. Thus matters stood until the incarnation of the Son; on which occasion it appears another revolution in the Godhead took place, by the introduction of the manhood of Jesus Christ into it; since which period there have been, according to the testimony of “Orthodoxy,” four persons in the Godhead. Of these, one only possesses the attributes of Deity in, and of, and by himself alone; the next two possess them by communication from him; and the fourth appears to have lost his identity by *absorption*; but in what proportion or manner his essence is swallowed up by, and identified with each of the other three, does not exactly appear.

The preceding sketch, Sir, contains a few of the outlines of that popular scheme of modern “Orthodoxy,”

* Watson's Theo. Inst. vol. 1. page 505.

out of whose pale many suppose there is no salvation to be obtained. Its principal characteristics are absurdity and inconsistency, which demonstrate its origin to be not divine, but a purely human invention. It sets out with asserting what it denies, and denying what it asserts. It maintains that there is but *one God*, who is a composition of three Persons or Spirits, *each of whom* it asserts to be *the only true God*, and yet denies the necessary result of that assertion, viz. that there are *three Gods*. Taking, however, one of these persons, viz. the second, whom they recognise as the offspring of the first person, they, nevertheless, particularly contend for the "supreme Godhead" of this second person, in, at least, nominal contradistinction from the first and third. But, I ask, what *supremacy* there can be when all are *equal*? or what *distinction* where *the three are one*? or how could the *offspring* wrest the *supremacy* out of the grasp of his *progenitors*? These are among the hallowed mysteries of this system, which are too sacred for vulgar inspection, and too deep for rational comprehension, and, consequently, those questions are unanswerable.

In this mystery of the "Trinity in unity," we behold, in one point of view, three nondescript entities, of whom I have been told, by a very *Orthodox* and Reverend champion of the cause, that "they are neither *spirits*, nor *persons*, nor *beings*—but *appellatives*;"† but who, in conjunction, constitute one all-perfect, self-existent and omnipotent being. It must be acknowledged that, "the mystery of Orthodoxy" is extremely perplexed, nor can I succeed in obtaining from any of its votaries any satisfactory explanation of even their own views of it. The great difficulty is to discover the real

† This sapient Theologian was brought from a distance of 30 or 40 miles, to preach down my doctrines. I came in contact with him, after his sermon was preached; and I drove him into the above stated confession, which amounts to this, that what are usually termed *persons* in the Trinity, are really *three nonentities*; and the Supreme God a composition of those three non-existing appellations. He then displayed "a white feather," and begged for a respite of the debate for 12 hours. On attempting to renew it the next day, he shrunk from the contest, and requested I would write him a letter. I did so; and it is now 15 months since he received it, but he has never yet attempted to answer it—and I suppose never will.

character of the *persons* who compose the Godhead: their orthodox guardians deny that they are three distinct rational beings, being well aware that if they confessed this, they must then acknowledge that each person is, in himself, either an *imperfect being*, or the *supreme God*. In the former case they could not contrive to compose an absolutely perfect God of three imperfect beings; and in the latter case they must confess the co-existence of three supreme Gods. Here then their system is completely at fault, they are impaled between the horns of an invincible dilemma, and I challenge the wisest of them to get out of it. Hence their miserable subterfuge of denying that the term *person* in the trinity, means a distinct rational being; but not a man of them dares to attempt a definition of this enigmatical word *person*, or give us a description of it as a *component part of the Deity*.

In this state of distress, charity requires that we should assist the Orthodox out of their difficulty. Taking them, therefore, upon their own ground, let us suppose the persons of the Trinity not to be distinct intellectual beings, but mere constituent parts of one all-perfect being; can we not in this case imagine them to be something between *entities* and *nonentities*?—*elementary* portions of *Deity*—*embryo attributes*, which, taken singly, are unproductive; but when mixed up with corresponding portions, they will all, in the aggregate, issue in Godhead? Thus we may suppose the Father to contribute his *quota* of *elementary power*; the Son his proportion of *elementary wisdom*; and the Holy Ghost his share of *embryo holiness*; while the understanding, will, and affections are collected from each, like the rays of light and heat in the focus of a burning glass, and become the common property of all?

From such a source, perhaps it might be possible to collect, at least in imagination, (and that mode is in perfect correspondence with the whole scheme!) a sufficient quantity of divine attributes to constitute one Supreme Godhead; but still we are at a loss for a *God* to exercise that office! For as we are now acting on behalf of the Orthodox, we must, as faithful agents, act in perfect unison with the principles of our guides and directors; and as, according to one of their self-contradictory dogmas, no one person in the Trinity is the true

God, so it is certain that no abstract accumulation of *attributes* can constitute an eternally self-existent and perfect being, with whom those attributes should originate, and in whom alone they should all reside; and who consequently can alone be the true God. It is therefore evident that their scheme is destitute of such a God; and I confess my fears, that it must remain so; for I acknowledge my inability to supply them with one out of all the principles with which they have furnished me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

To the Editor of The Bible Christian.

ON THE TITLES OF CHRIST.

SIR—There are few arguments to which Trinitarians more frequently resort, for the sake of making out a case, than that derived from the same titles being ascribed to God and Christ. They maintain that this circumstance proves an identity of nature. This argument may be rebutted in many ways; but the following observations are submitted for your consideration. They have occurred to my own mind; they may have been frequently set forth before; but I am not aware that they have. Even if they should be familiar to your readers, it is not amiss that they should be reiterated.

It must appear then to every reflecting person, that part of the difficulty arises from the poverty of language. It could not be completely avoided, without having a dialect exclusively appropriated to Divine subjects. Such a dialect could not remain exclusive, because we have so frequently to connect the Divine Name—Operations—Attributes, &c. with human affairs in our addresses to God, that there must be an intermixture and a contamination of the Sacred dialect. Besides; such a language would not be intelligible unless interpreted by other known words; and thus the combination of ideas respecting man and his concerns with the ideas of God and his attributes and works, would necessarily ensue. It is in fact impossible that there should be any

very large number of terms exclusively appropriated to God; and all that can be done, or is necessary to be done, is, to annex to any equivocal expressions some other terms that will limit the applicability of the whole to the Almighty—when there is any necessity for so doing, either from the nature of the subject or the prevailing errors of the human mind. It is obvious, however, that no such necessity exists, where the speaker or writer is satisfied that the persons to whom he is conveying instruction are under no misapprehension as to his meaning. This may be indubitably manifested to one who is teaching *viva voce*, by the very countenances of his audience; and may be so clear to the writer of a letter or book, from what he previously knows of the feelings, opinions, and modes of expression prevalent among his correspondents, as to admit of no doubt. This may be the case at the time when any particular work is composed, and may cease to be so some ages afterwards. The knowledge of the feelings and sentiments of the persons written to, cannot extend beyond that time; nor can those who read at such a distance of time have the advantage of knowing, from personal acquaintance and intercourse, those sentiments, associations, and trains of thought, that would form the most valuable of all commentaries upon an author's language, particularly in Epistolary writings, which form so large a part of the New Testament. From all this it follows, that one generation of readers might find difficulties and questionable passages, that the preceding generations would never discern. Nor need we be uneasy or concerned at this. The grand principles which we require to know, for the direction of our conduct and regulation of our lives, are not only capable of being made intelligible to all concerned, but are actually so clearly expressed over and over again, that we can not fail of understanding them if we wish. The difficulty consists not in any intellectual deficiency or intrinsic obscurity, but in a reluctance of the will to submit absolutely, and to labour strenuously.

There is no Christian, that builds his faith upon a proper foundation, who will be in any danger of having his faith shaken, by any use that sceptics may make of such ambiguities: but there is vast and imminent danger to Christianity, from an unfounded and pernicious doctrine

that is now finding a place among the novelties of the day, and is proclaimed as an undoubted and essential truth from pulpits in this town. This doctrine maintains the absolute inspiration of EVERY WORD that is in our Bibles; of course making the same Spirit dictate every word that is in the original of the Scriptures—the same mind embodying itself in words—therefore precluding all allowance for different associations, for occasional discrepancies, or for things hard to be understood in one writer being rendered more intelligible by the phraseology of another. But it is foreign to my present purpose to consider this subject in all its extent, or to advert to the pulpit illustrations of it—such as that Eve thought Cain was the Messiah, and gave him his name accordingly, but afterwards found she was mistaken, and so forth—an illustration that will perhaps puzzle your readers, when they consider that it was the Allwise Intelligence that dictated the words to Eve, and therefore could hardly be mistaken.

To return from this digression. It must appear plain to every thinking mind, that there must be some understanding exercised in interpreting many parts of Scripture, where the circumstances of the original writers and of those to whom they wrote differed materially from the manners, usages, and mental associations of those of the present day; but even into this part of the subject I do not wish to go at present. Such instances as the following, will bring us more closely to the immediate object of this letter.

The term “Father” is applied to God and to our earthly parent, without causing the slightest ambiguity in the mind of any one. The letters and syllables are precisely the same, but the associations so different as to make them to all intents and purposes distinct words. God only is wise—and yet Paul says, I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say. Could any one mistake Paul's meaning, and make him say that these wise men were Gods. Our Saviour declared that there was none good but God—excluding himself in the sense in which he then took the word: yet Joseph was a good man, and Barnabas was a good man; but Luke does not mean to say of either that he was God.

It must be evident, indeed, on a moment's reflexion, that the same words must often be used in different

senses, and that the context will limit the extent in which we ought to apply any particular word or phrase. Even the words King—Lord—God—that are frequently used in speaking of the Almighty, are applied to earthly potentates; nor did it cause any perplexity as to the nature of the Divine Being among the Jews, when they found the term God applied to Solomon, to Hezekiah, and to “those to whom the word of God came.” Again, God only hath immortality—yet we are to put on immortality; and those who have died before us are now immortal. But no one feels any difficulty in discerning that the word “immortality,” applied as part of the very essence of the Divine Being, is totally different from that immortality that has been brought to light by the Gospel, and of which we are heirs.

It is made an argument for the omniscience of Christ, that Peter says to him “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee:” but it requires but little sense to see that Christ might readily know what Peter meant in this assertion by “all things,” without even being a superior being, much less the Omniscient God himself. In the Book of Revelation, Christ says, “All the Churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and the heart, and I will give to every one according to your works.” And Solomon says of God—“Thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.” Therefore, Christ is God Omniscient. Surely there cannot be a better instance of weak and inconclusive argument. Suppose Solomon not to know at the time that God either had given or would give to his Son this power of knowing what passed in the hearts of men, without the intervention of external signs; what would become of this argument? Or, suppose that he did know it, on the principle of the plenary inspiration of every word; why could not God and Christ both know the hearts of men without being the same identical Being? They might both have the same knowledge, (and, to shorten the discussion, we may add Power,) and the one have it essentially and the other have it by derivation. So that if you merely state the fact of both having the same knowledge, you would consider them both to be the same Person: but, if you came to distinguish the underived Omniscience of the one, from the imparted powers of the other, you would

find that your conclusion had been exceedingly rash and erroneous. The same remark will apply to God and Christ both judging the world: a circumstance which is fully explained by the Father's having committed all judgment to the Son, and appointing a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained.

The same observations will apply to the word *Eternity* and its synonymes. The evidence for this class of words being used with very great latitude in the Sacred Writings, is so strong as to force Cruden, in his *Concordance*, notwithstanding a strong bias that makes him, in numerous instances, pervert the plainest language of Scripture, to make the following remarks—"The words *Eternal*, *Everlasting*, for *Ever*, are sometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly; for example, it is said, Gen. xvii. 8. 'I will give to thee and to thy seed, the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.' And, in chap. xiii. 15. 'I will give it to thee, and to thy seed for ever;' that is for a long space of time. And, in Gen. xlix. 56. we find *everlasting hills*, so called to denote their antiquity, stability, and duration; and this expression is used to show the long continuance and durableness of Joseph's blessing. God promises a throne to David, and *Eternal kingdom*, a posterity that will never be extinguished; that is that his and his Son's empire will be of a very long duration, 2 Sam. vii. 17. 1 Chron. xvii. 14. that it will even be *Eternal*, if here the kingdom of the Messiah be understood. Thus, *thou shalt be our guide from this time even for ever*, that is during our whole life. And in many other places of Scripture, and, in particular, when the word *forever* is applied to the Jewish rites and privileges, it commonly signifies no more than during the standing of that commonwealth, or until the coming of the Messiah.—Exodus, xii. 14. 17. Num. x. 8." Thus far Cruden. *O si sic Omnia.*

But there appears to me to be a very satisfactory mode of considering this subject, which has been too much neglected. If having the same powers and epithets attributed to two persons prove their identity—it is a much stronger proof of their nonidentity, or of their being different individuals, to have something predicated of the one that cannot, by any means, be attributed to the other. For instance, God knoweth the hearts of

men, Christ knoweth the hearts of men—therefore, they are the same. How much more conclusive is the other side of this argument—God knows the day of judgment, Christ was ignorant of it—therefore, they are not the same. Christ might know many things that God knows, as we all know something that God knows, without being himself the Omniscient; but if he were that Omniscient Being himself, he could not possibly be ignorant of what that Being knows. In short, the Almighty God and his Son could not be identical without having every assertion equally applicable to the one as to the other. I will now give a few examples, to make my meaning more clear.

Christ is called the last Adam. God cannot be so called: Nor can it be said of him, as of Jesus Christ the righteous, that he is an advocate with the Father. Christ is begotten of the Father—the Eternal God is not begotten of the Father. God could never be called, as Jesus Christ is, an Apostle—a High Priest—the Beginning of the Creation of God—the Brightness of the Father's Glory, the express image of his person. Who would ever assert of God, that he was the first-begotten of the dead—the first fruits of them that sleep—the faithful witness—who liveth and was dead. Christ is our Passover—can we say that God is our Passover? Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man—would it not be blasphemy to substitute God for Jesus in this sentence? Yet, on the reputed Orthodox hypothesis, there should be no absurdity or impropriety in it—for God only could be our Saviour in his own person, according to them; and Jesus had his name given to him because he was to save the people from their sins.

I remain, &c.

V. D. M.

January 18, 1831.

PERSECUTION FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE.

THE cause of religious toleration, or, as it has been more properly called, the *universal right of conscience*, is the cause of truth, virtue, and Christianity—where these have expanded and illuminated the mind, it has been cherished and maintained; nor does it require any minute metaphysical argument to show why this should be. He who has studied the nature of the human mind, and observed the influence of education in forming the intellectual habits and religious tenets of mankind, must glow with charity for the heterodoxy of his brother.—Giving to the word *education* its true and extensive signification, comprehending under it all that relates to our instruction, it will be evident that no two individuals receive the same education—for each individual has, for his preceptors, the particular form of government under which he lives, the friends with whom he associates, the books which he reads, all the trivial and frequently unobserved circumstances which every day occur to him, and which, to include them under a general term, we may call *chance*. To take an illustration from the physical world—who can doubt that the tears of Veturia, by prevailing over Coriolanus, established the empire of Rome, when ready to sink under the power of the Volsci, and occasioned that long train of victories which so completely changed the face of the world. In the same manner, in the moral world, character is formed by *accidents*. In the same moment when the peaceful soul of Newton was employed by no business and agitated by no possession, happening to rest himself under an apple tree, one of the apples by chance fell from a branch and gave the philosopher the first idea of his system of gravitation. It was an inquiry of one of the gardeners in Florence, when working the pumps, that, piquing the vanity of Galileo, led him to the discovery of the weight of air. “How many great minds,” observes the acute Helvetius, “are confounded among the people of moderate capacities for want of a certain tranquillity of soul—the question of a gardener or the fall of an apple.” When we consider the influence of accidents then in forming our moral character; and, we may fairly presume, in forming our

religious character : When we remember that so powerfully do circumstances operate, even in our interpretation of the *Book of Life*, that the tenets of most men are inherited as a legacy from their fathers, or fashioned according to the belief of their friends, should we not, as far as political and social convenience will permit, extend the hand of fellowship and brotherly love to those most readily opposed to us in their sentiments—and since truth is thus exposed to the “whips and scorns” of chance, should we not hold it as a maxim, that the public are under obligations to every man of every party who lays before them and even presses on them, whatever he holds to be useful, true, and important, provided he does it with temper and charity towards those who differ from him? We believe we are correct in stating, that it is the opinion of no Unitarian of the present day, that a belief in his doctrines is *necessary* to salvation. If this were the creed of any of them, we should not hesitate to call him a *bigot* ; but they *all* appear firmly and sincerely to believe that their opinions are highly favourable to virtue and true religion, and that therefore they do service to mankind by labouring to propagate them by every moral and peaceable method. With such convictions, indeed, could they or any other denomination of Christians acquit themselves to their own consciences, were they guilty of sitting down and indolently, not to say criminally, stifling within their own hearts what they deem beneficial to truth. A Unitarian persuaded of the truth and importance of his creed, might justify himself by the example of Christ and his Apostles, for propagating it by every fair and dispassionate argument in his power, regardless of the heat and acrimony of his opponents: that gracious teacher and his first disciples persevered calmly but resolutely to publish their doctrines, though they knew that the immediate consequence would not be peace but a sword. We might hope, however, that in these days no sword, either public or private, would be raised against any class of Christians, or even Heathens, who teach their tenets, however erroneous, with the temper, spirit, and conviction of truth. That the age in which we live is not altogether undisgraced by religious persecution, we know from recent incidents even in our own country ; but yet we hope that the blessed sun of Chris-

tianity has not been shining for upwards of eighteen hundred years, so much in vain, as that any considerable part of Christendom should yet be enveloped in so gross darkness as not to see that whatever doctrines may be true, heat and acrimony are manifestly false, and that how much soever, a man may believe, he cannot possibly, without laying aside all bitterness, wrath, and *persecution for conscience sake*, be a legitimate disciple of Jesus.

These few observations we have been induced to make, not with a view of defending the *tenets* of any sect, but from a desire to serve all sects. The circumstances and complexion of the times, marked with some stains (though we trust the disposition is only local and confined,) do no honour to the nobleman who, in the darkness of his ignorance, has been the perpetrator; nor to those, who, in the weakness or the wickedness of their empty pens, their narrow jealousies and their inflammatory alarms, have been the fomentors of a disgraceful outrage on the right of private judgment. These circumstances seem to indicate that the principles of universal toleration are not so thoroughly understood nor so widely spread, as they ought to be, among all who bear the name of *Christians*. HOMO.

LETTERS TO THE PRESBYTERIANS OF IRELAND.

No. I.

BRETHREN,

I take the liberty of addressing you, upon subjects deeply affecting your interests and privileges, as men and as Christians. I am a plain man, and I shall write plainly; I am a Christian, and I shall endeavour to maintain a temper and spirit "worthy of that high vocation wherewith I am called." In times of great popular excitement, and during the violent conflicts of parties, when my principles were calumniated, when the friends of my heart experienced the most relentless persecution, and when the dearest rights of Presbyterians were audaciously trodden down by a dominant faction in the Synod of Ulster, I acknowledge, that I felt as

keenly, and perhaps expressed myself as warmly, as any of my injured brethren. Now, however, when the calm hath come after the tempest, I am enabled "to possess my soul in patience;" and I most earnestly desire, to direct your attention, in the spirit of the Gospel, to several considerations, of no ordinary importance. In looking seriously at the Presbyterians of Ireland, at this moment, it is evident, that they may be divided into several classes—viz. Those who have manfully cast off the trammels of human authority in matters of faith, and determined, at all hazards, to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;"—those who, in their hearts, entirely disapprove of the intolerant enactments of the Synod of Ulster, and utterly disbelieve the gloomy system of Calvinism, whilst, for worldly interest or convenience, from lukewarmness or timidity, they continue to wear "the yoke of bondage;"—and those who honestly adhere to the Presbyterian Bodies, in which the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment are practically denied, whilst the doors of admission to the Church are opened and closed, according to the mere will and humour of a few fallible and sinful men. To each of these three great classes of Presbyterians, I shall address myself, in regular order.

In the first place, I turn, with the most cordial affection, to you, my Brethren, who have nobly rejected the authority of man in those things which belong to your eternal interests, and have firmly resolved never to be "entangled with the yoke of bondage." Christian Confessors! I honour your fortitude, your integrity, your disinterestedness! I know well, the fearful odds against which you had to contend. It was not merely the fury of the ignorant and fanatical multitude that was directed against you, by the foulest misrepresentations of your opinions; the influence of fashion, the baseness of sycophancy, the certainty of temporal loss, and the frowns of earthly power, all conspired to seduce you from the onward path of duty. Many of you, besides, had to struggle with other and more distressing difficulties. Young Ministers whom you had baptized, educated, ordained—men who were indebted to you for their public stations and public characters—men whom you had been mainly instrumental in raising to the very eminences whence they hurled their envenomed darts at

you—yes, even such turned upon you with the fabled ingratitude of the viper, and stung the very hands that had warmed them into life. Others again, less infamous but scarcely less culpable, who had, for years, enjoyed the hospitalities of your humble roofs, participated in the confidence of your dearest social affections, joined in your domestic devotions, and, well knowing your opinions, mingled with you in the most sacred public ordinances of religion, suddenly became your bitterest persecutors, so that each of you might say, “mine own familiar friend hath lifted up his heel against me,” because you would not stain your consciences by the awful guilt of falsehood and hypocrisy! When the cup which you had to drink was not rendered sufficiently bitter by the wormwood of sectarian hatred, the gall of political rancour was infused into the draught; and, whilst you were jeopardizing every earthly interest “to maintain a good conscience,” you were foully and falsely represented as being equally enemies to Divine Truth, and to the constitution of your country! In addition to all these plans for effecting your ruin, hired and secret emissaries were sent into the houses of your people to misrepresent your doctrines, defamatory publications were industriously circulated, public preachings were instituted in your congregations to keep alive the flames of discord; and, whenever a landlord could be roused, by falsehood and trickery, to harass and persecute you, or a petty agent enlisted against you, or the arm of the civil law raised for your destruction, these temporal penalties were exultingly superadded to the anathemas of Orthodoxy. To those of you who were in comparatively easy circumstances, surrounded by a united and enlightened people, cheered by the countenance of the wise and good, and not exposed to serious worldly privations, less honour is due; but I want language to express my respect and admiration, when I turn to Wm. Porter, who nobly sacrificed to truth and honesty the *third* part of a scanty income—to Thos. Alexander, Alex. Montgomery, and Wm. Glendy, who, under the most adverse and trying circumstances, “weathered the storm” of a most unprincipled and heartless politico-religious persecution—to Robt. Campbell, many of whose hearers have been compelled, by the terror of an audacious landlord, to desert their beloved pastor, who is about to be driven from his

peaceful home by an act of legal oppression—to Samuel Arnold, of Warrenpoint, the amiable victim of depraved evangelicism and local tyranny—and to John Watson, of Greyabbey, who is well known to my readers as equally possessing the unyielding fortitude and gentle spirit of a Christian martyr! Ye venerable Christian Ministers! ye excellent and irreproachable men! whilst my heart swells with indignation in contemplating the unmerited indignities to which you have been exposed, and bleeds over the sorrows and privations of your estimable families, I glory in participating common principles with men whom no intimidation could daunt, no privation could appal, and no temporal convenience seduce from the open path of integrity. Viewed in contrast with your ungrateful and ungenerous persecutors, although your brows be traced with untimely furrows, and your heads whitened with untimely snows, how honourable, how manly do you appear! Yet, when I think of the fiery trials through which you have passed, and of the dangers by which some of you are still surrounded, I bless God, that my own integrity was not exposed to the same ordeal; and I rather wonder, that *so many* passed through the “fiery furnace” unconsumed, than feel surprise, that *many others* did not subject themselves to the same appalling sufferings. Whilst, however, I honour you faithful Ministers of the Gospel, I praise even more, many of the kind-hearted people who cheered and supported you in your virtuous struggles. In spite of all the disingenuous arts which were practised to mislead their minds, to awaken their prejudices, to enlist their passions, to flatter their vanity, to gratify their pride, and to terrify them by the unmanly threats of agents and landlords, “they have formed a wall of defence around you,” within which you have enjoyed security, if not repose. To the uncompromising fidelity of these truly Christian men, you owe it, this day, that you are not houseless wanderers upon a cold and cheerless world. Had you been left unprotected, to “the tender mercies” of the leaders amongst your Synodical brethren, you have had incontestable proofs, that you would have been driven, both from your pulpits and your houses, as awful examples to deter others from disputing the infallible authority of the Church! To the generous friends that rallied around you in the hour of

peril, you owe a debt of affection which, I am confident, you will honourably discharge by unwearied exertions for their interest and edification. They are tried men, tested men—"jewels of great price," whom you ought to wear "in your heart of hearts." I know the strong temptations to which many of them, especially in the congregation of Templepatrick, have been exposed; and too much praise cannot be given to those intrepid men, who placed all their temporal interests in jeopardy, rather than turn traitors to their principles of Truth, and the cause of Christian Liberty. Some few, indeed, "have ceased to walk with you." This is no matter of surprise; and, save on their own account, it is no matter of regret. The Blessed Founder of our Holy Religion had lukewarm, selfish adherents, "who walked no more with him," when he announced that his followers would be exposed to sufferings, and declared that "his kingdom was not of *this world*." There have always been too many *nominal Christians* to illustrate the *Parable of the Sower*—men "having no root in themselves, and so enduring but *for a time*: afterwards, *when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake*, immediately they are *offended*." The loss of such men is real gain: faithless followers are more to be dreaded than open enemies: "the chaff is now separated from the wheat:" you know the steady friends upon whom you can rely. With a very few exceptions, you are still surrounded by all that was enlightened in understanding, amiable in disposition, and irreproachable in life, amongst your people. In general, you have been deserted *only* by the refuse of your flocks—the very dregs of a political faction, the ignorant, the timid, and the worthless. This is a notorious and indisputable fact. Some temporal emolument you have lost, a *few* deceived and worthy men may have separated from your communion, and many of you are still exposed to the vengeance of temporal power. These things are to be deplored; but, you enjoy many countervailing advantages. The influence of clerical trickery and delusion has passed away; the wild clamour of ignorant and misguided multitudes has almost ceased; your principles, both on the subject of doctrine and church government, are *now* generally understood and duly appreciated; the faith which you have "built upon the sure foundation of the Prophets,

the Saviour, and the Apostles," may be still branded as Arianism and Heresy,—but the spell of these magic calumnies of Orthodoxy is broken; and the people are rapidly discovering, that these doctrines, at the bare mention of which they were accustomed to shudder as *heretical*, are, in reality, the great doctrines of the BIBLE; and that those men whom they were taught to abhor as "enemies of Christ," are, in fact, the boldest and firmest defenders of his honour and his cause!

It is ever thus, that the beneficent Providence of God "causeth the wrath of man to praise Him." Short-sighted and deluded mortals spread snares for the feet of their brethren; and they usually exult for a season in beholding that some are entangled; but, in the end, they are caught in their own meshes, as Haman was hanged upon the very gallows which he had inhumanly erected for the unjust execution of Mordecai, the Jew. No man can read the history of the world or of the Church, without tracing every-where the blessed, overruling Providence of Heaven. The cruelty and madness of tyranny have led to the regeneration of nations, and "the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of the Church." Seldom has the gracious Providence of God been more strikingly illustrated, than in the progress of events connected with Presbyterianism in this country, during the last three years. For many years preceding, a fatal lethargy and spurious liberality had paralyzed the friends of Gospel truth and charity; and "whilst they slept, an enemy came, unawares, and sowed tares amongst the wheat." The weeds which "choked the good seed," remained unobserved or unremoved; and the enemy began to imagine that, by one daring effort, he might become undisputed master of the whole land. The attempt was made, and seemed almost crowned with success, when the husbandman awoke from his slumbers, collected all his virtuous energies, and repelled the audacious invader of his property and his rights. The fact is notorious: three years ago, Calvinism and misnamed evangelicism had well nigh overshadowed and destroyed rational and genuine Christianity amongst the Presbyterians of Ulster; but, under the blessing of Heaven, the presumptuous efforts of the majority of the General Synod to annihilate all freedom of thought and utterance, have re-animated the friends, and given an irresis-

tible impulse to the cause of truth. I feel as deep a persuasion as I do of my own existence, that anti-Trinitarians and anti-Calvinists, thoroughly acquainted with the grounds of their opinions and able to defend them, have increased *twenty fold* in Ulster during the last three years. The spirit of inquiry is abroad; men are no longer terrified by names; they freely read "The Bible Christian" and other works prohibited by the Index Expurgatorius of Orthodoxy; the scales of prejudice have dropped from their eyes, and they are beginning to see the dawn of a glorious day, even in those portions of the Province where the polar winter of Calvinism longest brooded in uninterrupted darkness. The progress of a cheering and benignant Theology is equally evident in the southern portions of this Island. By the zealous and enlightened labours, the virtuous and christian lives of Drummond and Armstrong, Hutton and Martineau, in Dublin, Unitarianism is steadily moving onward with all its happy train of charities and virtues. Many men of the highest talents and most respectable stations, have withdrawn from the Athanasian worship of the Established Church and attached themselves to the Congregation of Strand-street, where they now adore "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the ONLY TRUE GOD." In Cork, Bandon, and many other places, there is a zeal, especially amongst the laity, commensurate with the holiness of their cause, and a success proportioned to their zeal.

Can we, brethren, behold these things—can we look back upon the ordeal through which many of us have passed, the generous sympathy and support which we have experienced, the clouds of prejudice that have rolled away, the blessed light that is rapidly spreading over our native land, the signal discomfiture of those plans which were laid for our destruction, the affectionate co-operation established amongst ourselves, and the disinterested kindness exercised towards us by others—can we contemplate these things without beholding the merciful providence of God, and prostrating our spirits before Him, with unbounded gratitude and love? The gracious dispensations, however, of which we have experienced the kindness, ought not merely to call forth our gratitude, but also to awaken deep and serious reflection with regard to the duties demanded

by the stations which we occupy, and the blessings which we have received. Wonderfully sustained by the goodness of God and the kindness of man, standing erect in the firm attitude of freemen, with the vile fetters which were forged to enslave us lying broken at our feet, what should be our conduct? Ought we to fold our arms in sloth, to lay ourselves down upon the couch of indifference, to be satisfied that "we have fought the good fight," and to imagine that "we have finished our course?" No, brethren, no. Our lukewarm security formerly induced us to slumber upon the brink of a precipice; and, should we relapse into our heedless folly, after the warning we have received, our disgrace and our criminality will be augmented one hundred fold. Though our opponents have recoiled discomfited from the conflict, they are still powerful in their "locust multitudes," and their practised leaders. They are, moreover, mortified by defeat, and burn to recover their lost renown. The faults of rashness which they committed through an audacious confidence in their own strength and our weakness, have taught them lessons of caution; and, we may rest assured, that, if we become relaxed in our vigilance and discipline, we shall be fatally surprised. We now occupy the vantage ground of high principle, unblemished character, and public sympathy: our forces have increased, and are increasing: even in the enemy's camp and country we have many friends: and our watchword ought therefore to be—"onward, onward, in the good cause!" The events of the world beckon us to advance. "The lines of knowledge are gone forth over the earth; and the spirit of Liberty is moving over the face of the nations." Enlightened and liberal views, upon all subjects, are rolling forward with accelerated speed in our native isles: ecclesiastical and civil despotism, over all the world, are trembling amidst their crazy and tottering bulwarks. If ever there was a combination of time and circumstances to inspire confidence and animate exertion, we enjoy its advantages at the present conjuncture. Nothing is wanting to secure success, but devoted zeal, uncompromising candour, and persevering energy. "The fields are white unto the harvest," and if "the labourers be few," they are bound to exercise the greater diligence to compensate for their deficiency of numbers. It is a strange, though not an un-

accountable fact, that the advocates of gloomy, mysterious, and incomprehensible dogmas—the supporters of irrational and revolting systems—are always more zealous and more laborious, than those who entertain cheering and rational views of Divine Truth. The Scribes and Pharisees, of old, “encompassed sea and land to make one proselyte,” though they “made him tenfold more the child of Satan than before;” and their followers, in all ages, have closely imitated their example. It is a melancholy fact, that “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light,” that “the feet of men are swift to do evil but slow to do good,” and that the sower of dissension is more zealous than the maker of peace! Brethren, these things ought not to be: the holiest cause demands the highest exertion; and those who feel that their principles are based upon the foundation of everlasting truth, cannot, without the deepest criminality, be indifferent to their dissemination. I therefore most earnestly, affectionately, and respectfully call upon the Ministers of the Synod of Munster, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, to *persevere* in the good work which they have for some years so successfully prosecuted; “to be instant in season and out of season; to rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine;” to imbue the minds of the young with the sacred principles of truth and charity; to preach boldly “the whole counsel of God;” to teach their people in the friendly intercourse of the domestic circle; and to labour, individually and conjointly, for the extension of those opinions which they sincerely believe to be founded upon the immutable word of God. More especially I invoke the *Laity* of these three untrammelled Churches, to aid, encourage, and cheer the labours of their Ministers. Without your countenance, co-operation, and liberality, my lay brethren, your Pastors can accomplish no great or paramount objects of usefulness. Hitherto, your exertions merit the highest commendation. You have generously, nobly come forward to cheer by your sympathy, and sustain by your munificence, every injured and persecuted Minister. You have attended meetings, you have encouraged publications, and you have laid the solid foundations of a FUND for the perpetual protection of the Rights of Conscience,

and dissemination of Religious Truth ! I freely confess, that your generous and disinterested labours have hitherto exceeded my most sanguine expectations : every call upon your liberality has been answered with the most gratifying promptitude and kindness ; and many plans of disinterested and remarkable munificence have been suggested and executed exclusively by yourselves. In looking forward to the future, I have many hopes, and but one fear : my hopes rest upon your characters and principles ; my sole fear arises from that weakness of human nature, which too generally leads men to relax their exertions even in the holiest cause. *With perseverance* and the blessing of Providence, all necessary goods are attainable : *without perseverance*, no substantial advantage can be secured. I do not doubt your principles, I do not suspect your earnestness in the cause of Christian liberty ; I only fear, that from the infirmity of man, your zeal may decline, as the interesting circumstances which awakened it, roll away into the distance of years.

To this diminution of exertion, both Ministers and people are equally exposed. It will be the part of wisdom, therefore, to devise means for counteracting this natural tendency of human nature, and to establish certain permanent principles, of steady and vigorous action, independent of particular causes of excitement. To some of these means, I shall hereafter advert ; but, at present, I cannot avoid recommending, with all the earnestness in my power, the immediate establishment of Congregational, or District Libraries. Ignorance is the strong-hold, both of error and fanaticism : “ for lack of knowledge,” saith the Prophet, “ my people are destroyed.” So long as the people are uninstructed with regard to the great doctrines of the Bible, they will take their faith from *Creeeds* and *Catechisms*, and be the easy prey of every knave or fanatic : but, give them knowledge, and they will think for themselves, and cease to “ be carried about by every wind of doctrine.” The darkness of ignorance has perpetuated the mysterious influence of Calvinistic Theology, as the darkness of night infuses terrors into weak understandings : with the return of day, the fears of the most timid completely vanish, and under the enlivening beams of Christian knowledge, the gloomy clouds of Calvinism would soon

be dispelled from the earth. Such Libraries as I propose, would not consist merely of Books enforcing the peculiar tenets of Unitarianism : this would be acting upon the contracted and soul-debasing plan adopted by the Calvinists, whose Libraries are only calculated to confirm prejudices, and not to augment knowledge. I would put into Christian Libraries the most eminent Commentators of *all sects*, the standard Controversial Writings of *all parties*, and books of solid information, connected with the peculiar views of *no party*. To these I would add valuable works on general subjects, having no relation whatever to Theology ; and, by such means, I would prepare men to *form their own opinions*. With regard to the result, I should have no apprehension. The Trinitarian and Calvinist may fear to have the veil removed from *his mysteries* : the Unitarian is satisfied, that the most extensive investigation and comparison will only lead to the more certain adoption of *Divine Truth*. Those whose passions and intesests are enlisted on the side of a party or a system, naturally decry the exercise of reason, and the extension of knowledge : those who believe that *Truth* is “the jewel of great price,” search for it diligently wherever it is to be found. These hints, I respectfully submit to the consideration of my Brethren ; and especially to the affluent laity connected with the liberal Presbyterians. A few Pounds, which could be easily spared, and which would afford more solid satisfaction than Thousands hoarded up, or expended on vanity, would lay the permanent foundation of a Library devoted to the extension of religious knowledge, and the advancement of social peace. In my next, I shall address the *temporizing* Presbyterians of Ireland—a class unhappily too numerous in the present age.

Believe me to be, Brethren,
Your faithful friend,
CHRISTIANUS.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

To the Editors of the Bible Christian.

UNDER the head "Unitarianism in America," I observe, in your last publication, a statement relative to the "Society of Friends" in that quarter of the globe, in which *nine-tenths* of them are represented as being Unitarians, which, from authentic information in my possession, I am, most unequivocally, enabled to deny. Those who have embraced Unitarian opinions are designated "Hickites," and, in the aggregate, comprise but a *small proportion*, in point of numbers, compared with those who are denominated "Orthodox Friends," and who adhere to the principles professed by our Society from the earliest period of its existence down to the present day; so that if the numbers, as stated by you, were *reversed*, it would be much nearer the truth.

-You, no doubt, conceived your statement to be correct when you published it; this I do not call in question; yet I trust you will have no objection to afford me an opportunity, in your next number, of thus contradicting an assertion which I fully believe to be so much at variance with the true state of the case, and oblige

A FRIEND.

Belfast, 12th Mo. 27th, 1830.

This is the Letter which came too late for last month's publication. Before speaking of the matter of fact, we would, with all respect, inform our "Friend," that he is in error as to the principles of his Society from the earliest times; and the authority for saying so is no less than WILLIAM PENN, a man deserving of the highest respect on every account, but more particular so when speaking of the Friends in America. The work to which we refer is, "The SANDY FOUNDATION SHAKEN; or, those so generally believed and applauded Doctrines of, One God subsisting in three distinct and separate Persons; the impossibility of God's pardoning sinners without a plenary satisfaction; and the Justification of impure Persons by imputative righteousness, refuted from the authority of Scripture Testimonies and Right Reason: by William Penn, a Builder on that foundation

which cannot be moved." The following extract is very explicit on the principles maintained by the Friends or Quakers of that day :—

" But that which most of all deserves a lamentation is, that Protestants, whose better arguments have confuted the plea of such as made tradition and men's prescriptions unquestionable in circumstances, should, themselves, by print and practice, so openly declare and contend for its authority in essentials; as must be obvious to any that observe their zealous anathemas against whosoever refuse a compliance with them in doctrines manifestly bottomed upon men's nice inventions. This is the right state of the controversy that is maintained by us (contemptibly called Quakers,) against the world, and the undoubted reason of our severe treatment at its hands; the end of God Almighty's raising us, being for no other purpose than to declare that which our eyes have seen, our ears heard, and which our hands have handled of the Eternal Word, in opposition to the private opinions, conjectures, and interpretations of men concerning God and religion, that all people might be thereby reduced to faith in, and obedience to the universal Grace which brings salvation; which, as it only can restore sound judgment concerning God, and effect redemption from iniquity, so its being relinquished by men was the very ground both of their division in judgment and corruption in manners."

After giving the history of his writing the tract, he thus proceeds :—

" What remains is to inform the reader, that, with great brevity, I have discussed and endeavoured a total enervation of those cardinal points and chief doctrines, so firmly believed and continually imposed for articles of Christian Faith :—1. *The Trinity of separate persons, in the Unity of Essence.* 2. *God's incapacity to forgive without the fullest satisfaction paid to him by another.* 3. *A justification of impure persons from an imputative righteousness.*—Which principles, let me tell thee, reader, are not more repugnant to Scripture, reason, and soul's-security, than most destructive to God's honour, in his *unity, mercy, and purity.*

" Therefore, I beseech thee to exterminate passion from her predominancy, in the perusal of this discourse since it was writ in love to thee; that, whilst it is thy desire to know, love, and fear God Almighty, above men's precepts, thou may'st not miss so good an end by the blind embraces of tradition for truth. But in the nobility of a true Berean, search and enquire; letting the good old verity, not a pretended antiquity, (whilst a mere novelty,) and solid reason, not an over-fond credulity sway the balance of thy judgment, that both stability and certainty may accompany thy determinations.—Farewell."

The foregoing extracts are from the Preface; the following is from the Tract itself.—After quoting some of the strong and explicit declarations of the Unity of God in both Covenants, he proceeds :—

“ From all which I shall lay down this one assertion, that the testimonies of Scripture, both under the law, and since the Gospel dispensation, declare *one to be God*, and *God to be One*, on which I shall raise this argument: If God, as the Scriptures testify, hath never been declared or believed, but as *the Holy One*, then will it follow that *God is not a Holy Three*, nor doth subsist in *three distinct and separate Holy ones*: but the forecited Scriptures undeniably prove that one is God, and God only is that Holy one; therefore, he cannot be divided into, or subsist in an Holy Three, or Three distinct and separate Holy Ones. Neither can this receive the least prejudice from that frequent but impertinent distinction, that he is *One* in substance, but *Three* in persons or subsistences; since God was not declared or believed in completely, or without his subsistences; nor did he require homage from his creatures as an incomplete or abstracted being, but as God the Holy One, for so, He should be manifested and worshipped without that which was absolutely necessary to himself:—so that either the testimonies of the afore-mentioned Scriptures are to be believed concerning God, that he is entirely and completely, not abstractly and distinctly, the Holy One, or else their authority to be denied by these Trinitarians, and, on the contrary, if they pretend to credit those holy testimonies, they must necessarily conclude their kind of Trinity a fiction.”

We have to remark further, that it appears from this Tract, that Geo. Whitehead perfectly coincided in these sentiments, and publicly maintained them against a fanatical fellow of the name of Thos. Vincent. Now this same Geo. Whitehead was one of thirty-one “primitive Friends,” that, in the year 1693, signed a paper, which was presented to Parliament, in which it was declared:

“ 1. That Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is the true Messiah, the very Christ, the Son of the Living God, to whom all the Prophets gave witness: and that we do highly value his death, sufferings, works, offices, and merits, for the redemption of mankind, together with his laws, doctrine, and ministry.—
2. That this very Christ of God, who is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, was slain, was dead, and is alive, and lives for ever in his divine glory, dominion, and power, with the Father. And we know of no other doctrine or principle preached, maintained, or ever received among or by us, since we were a people, contrary to the aforesaid.”

Our Friend seems ambitious of putting in his claim to an alliance with the Orthodox; but I am afraid it is all to no purpose. The Society of Friends cannot pronounce the Shibboleth of the party. They cannot cry “Trinity” either according the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Athanasian Creed; and they are diametrically opposed to the self-constituted Orthodox, in all the other doctrinal points on which Christian duty so

much depends. We could quote William Penn directly for this assertion also, but for variety we shall use a late demi-official American statement of the Doctrine of the Society of Friends, by Elisha Bates: from which it appears that they deny the Doctrine of Original Sin.

"But we deny the doctrine of 'original sin;' and cannot suppose that sin is imputed to infants, (till they actually commit it;) for this obvious reason; that "*they* are by nature children of wrath, who walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience; here the apostle gives *their evil walking*, (and not any thing that had been committed by Adam,) as the reason of their being children of wrath. And this is suitable to the whole strain of the Gospel, where no man is threatened or judged, for what iniquity he hath not wrought."—(*Vide Barclay's Apol. Prop. 4.*)

"Thus, we conceive it contrary to the attributes of the Almighty, his mercy, and his justice, to charge any of his creatures with *guilt*, for offences in which they had no agency. It is even contrary to the simplest principles of right and wrong, which we consider binding on men; and we dare not charge the Divine Character, with being thus far below that standard of justice, which is set up for human actions."

They deny arbitrary decrees—Election and Reprobation—and maintain the Universality of Divine Grace.

"We believe that salvation, through Jesus Christ, is freely offered to all men. The Gospel is emphatically *good tidings of great joy*—embracing *all people* in its blessed operation. For, 'as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men;' Rom. v. 12, so all men stood (or stand) in need of a Saviour. And as the disease, or 'death,' reached to all men, so the remedy, which was provided, reached also unto all. To this the Scriptures bear ample testimony, in divers places. For they expressly declare, that, 'As in Adam, all die, so in Christ, shall all be made alive.' 1 Cor. xv. 22. And, 'as by the offence of *one*, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of *one*, the free gift came upon *all men*, unto justification of life.'" Rom. v. 18.

"The doctrine of the possibility of salvation to all men, is essential, to be consistent with the attributes of the Deity. Because he cannot be represented as merciful or just or equal in his ways, if this principle be denied. He cannot be represented as *merciful* to those to whom he extends *no mercy*—nor *just* in punishing those who *do his will*—nor *equal* in dispensing *happiness* to one and *misery* to another—when *both* stood in the same relation to him.

"It is not intended to make the present a controversial work; and yet it seems difficult to place the subject in a proper point of view, without noticing the opposite doctrine. This doctrine supposes salvation is *not possible* to all: but that the final happiness or misery of mankind, and their actions in this life, are fixed by an

unchangeable decree, from all eternity. That the will of God is properly divided into secret and revealed—and these do not always correspond, or as it is expressed, ‘are apparently different.’ The *revealed will*, they say, embraces the Divine commands and precepts. The *secret will* fixes the event beyond the possibility of change and contingency. Thus, when a command, or warning, or invitation, is given to the reprobate, or those who are finally lost, this is called the *revealed will* of God. But the *secret will* renders it absolutely impossible for them to do otherwise than go counter to the revealed will. And this disobedience to the *revealed will* of God, is called *wilful* and *obstinate*, and those who are in it, are said to be *justly* punished for their *wilful* disobedience, and *obstinate* refusal to accept salvation : though the *secret will* cannot be resisted ; and the reprobate are as completely governed by it, as the elect themselves.

Perhaps there is no system of opinions received among men, which contains so many paradoxes, as the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation : and none is more difficult to reconcile with itself, with Scripture, and with reason.”

They deny vicarious satisfaction :—

“ William Penn, vol. 5, p. 310, says, ‘ We cannot believe that Christ’s death and sufferings so satisfy God, or justify men, as that they are *thereby* accepted of God. They are indeed put into a *state*, capable of being accepted of God, and, through the obedience of faith and sanctification of the spirit, *are* in a state of acceptance.’ ‘ And though Christ did *die* for us, yet we must, through the aid of his grace, work out our salvation with fear and trembling. As *he* died *for* sin, so *we* must die *to* sin, or we cannot be said to be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ.’ ”

They deny imputed Righteousness, and are opposed to the Calvinistic view of Justification :—

“ To conclude, ‘ let none be so bold as to mock God, supposing themselves justified and accepted in the sight of God, by virtue of Christ’s death and sufferings, while they remain unsanctified and unjustified in their own hearts, and polluted in their sins, lest their hope prove that of the hypocrite, which perisheth. Neither let any foolishly imagine, that they can, by their own works, or by the performance of any ceremonies, or traditions, or by the giving of gold or money, or by afflicting their bodies in will-worship, and voluntary humility, or foolishly striving to conform their way to the outward letter of the law, flatter themselves that they *merit* before God, or draw a debt upon him, or that any man or men have power to make such kind of things effectual to their justification, lest they be found foolish boasters, and strangers to Christ—indeed. But blessed for ever are they that, having truly had a sense of their own *unworthiness* and sinfulness, and having seen all their own endeavours and performances fruitless and vain, and beheld their own emptiness, and the vanity of their hopes, faith, and confidence, while they remain inwardly pursued and condemned by God’s holy witness in their hearts, and so having applied themselves thereto, and suffered his grace to work in them, are become changed and renewed

in the spirit of their minds, past from death unto life, and know Jesus arisen in them, working both the will and the deed: and so having put on the Lord Jesus Christ, in effect, are clothed with him, and partake of his righteousness and nature. Such can draw near to the Lord with boldness, and know their acceptance, in and by him, in whom, and in as many as are found in him, the Father is well pleased.'"—(*Barclay's Apol. Prop. 7.*)

All these are points of vast practical importance, in which we are happy to have the concurrence of our brethren in the Society of Friends—and we wish them much to leave off their coquetting with Orthodoxy and to join their efforts with ours in bringing about a more healthy state of the public mind with respect to Religion.

But what do we say about the contradiction of our assertion, that the nine-tenths of the Society of Friends in America are Unitarians? We say that we had authority for making the assertion. That authority is an American, who has promised us an official document in support of his assertion, and, therefore, all that we can say now is to request our readers to suspend their judgment until our informant can send us his voucher, which we expected to receive in time for this number, but hope certainly to have next month.

In all that we have now said, or shall hereafter say, on these points, we do not wish to be thought sticklers for hereditary adherence to Religious opinions without reason—nor for numbers being a test of truth. We *do* wish to find that truth is beginning to prevail—but we do not think prevalence or non-prevalence any *test* of truth, and our brethren, "The Friends," will, we suppose, attach as little importance to mere number without weight as we can do. We do wish to find glimpses of divine truth shining forth amidst the darkness of former times, and rejoice where we find staunch supporters of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ; but we do not consider *their* way of thinking any justification of *our* way of thinking—both theirs and ours must stand or fall by that book which contains the truth and the whole truth of what God has revealed to us *of* his Son and *by* his Son.

EDITOR.

P.S.—Since giving the above observations to the Printer, we have received the official document alluded to. Every Subscriber shall receive a copy gratis—but

besides giving it this circulation, we think it right to copy the following table into our present number, that we may be sure of its accompanying our "Friend's" letter. We certainly concur with our informant in being surprized "at the uncourteousness, or rather the imprudence, of making an 'unequivocal denial' of statements, which, from the frequent intercourse between America and these countries, could be so easily verified, and put in an *undeniable* and unquestionable shape. Our authority for making our original statement further remarks: "A Friend has been pleased to designate his brethren in America who are not classed among the Orthodox, Hickites." We regard the appellation as reproachful, and as arising from a spirit which we should not have thought to operate among Friends, who pretend to this peculiar fruit of the Spirit, viz. LOVE.

Statement showing the number of Members belonging to the respective Quarterly Meetings, composing the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia; and also the number of those usually called Orthodox.

Quarterly Meetings.	Friends.			Total Frnds	Orthodox, so called.			Total Orth
	Males	Fems.	Minrs		Males	Fems.	Minrs	
Philadelphia.....	561	762	1074	2397	536	899	1008	2443
Abington.....	675	928	1226	2829	65	99	157	321
Bucks.....	683	973	1175	2831	118	191	180	489
Concord.....	655	889	1029	2573	189	285	316	790
Caln.....	228	264	429	921	150	186	221	557
Western.....	566	715	1015	2296	119	161	174	454
Southern.....	129	181	191	501	8	10	12	30
Burlington....	262	381	406	1049	196	345	259	800
Haddonfield....	200	238	383	821	169	295	325	789
Salem.....	285	386	567	1238	75	129	94	298
Shrewsbury and Rahway.....	174	246	265	685	42	75	46	163
Total...	4418	5963	7760	18141	1667	2675	2792	7134

There are 144 Men, 159 Women, and 133 Children—total, 436, not included in the above account, having withdrawn from Meetings for Discipline; and from one small Monthly Meeting (nearly all Friends), no returns have yet been received.

Of 145 Meeting-Houses, within the limits of this Yearly Meeting, 102 remain in the possession of Friends; 23 are in the possession of those called Orthodox, and 20 are yet in the possession and occupancy of both.

Our Orthodox Friends, as they call themselves, in making *their* statement of the number of their Members, by counting the minor children of our Friends with them, would probably vary materially from the above statement; but the unfairness of this mode of calculating their numbers is easily perceived—in no other way, it is believed, would they essentially differ from the statement here made.

The Yearly Meeting of Baltimore, previous to the separation, consisted of from ten to twelve thousand members; of whom a small number, called Orthodox, not exceeding about three hundred, including children, have separated from it.

By a letter recently received from America, it appears that, last Autumn, the Monthly Meeting of Muncy, a branch of Philadelphia Friendly Meeting, separated, and that about one-third of the Members withdrew from the Meeting with the Orthodox party.

These are all the Extracts necessary from this document. If there be added to the 25,000 in the table, 11,000 from Baltimore—deducting 300 for the Orthodox separatists—there will be upwards of 36,000, of whom *seven thousand five hundred* have gone off under the name of Orthodox, and nearly *twenty-nine thousand* remain as contra-distinguished from them on the Great Question of their separation—the Trinity. The book of Elisha Bates, from which we have already selected some interesting quotations, is circulated by the Friends of this country, and is therefore presumed to be sufficiently Orthodox for them—yet hear how weakly the author apologizes for not introducing an article on the Trinity:—

“Should any have remarked that I have not made the Trinity, nor the Atonement, subjects of distinct articles, and be dissatisfied with the supposed omission, I would observe that a belief in God and his divine attributes is evident throughout the whole work, and did not appear to me to require a particular article; seeing also that this first principle of religion is universally believed. The Divinity of Jesus Christ, together with his appearance in the flesh, and the benefits which *all men have* derived from what he *did outwardly* and *may* derive from what he does inwardly, is fully acknowledged in an article devoted to that purpose; and, also, in several other articles which are nominally on other subjects. The Holy Spirit and its presence and operation in the heart of man, according to the precious promises of our blessed Lord, are acknowledged in the article on immediate

Revelation, and in divers other parts of the work. I have, therefore, chosen to follow the example of the Holy Scriptures, or the Holy men who were inspired to write them, *in leaving the subject on this general ground*, rather than imitate those speculative theologians, who, attempting to explain the Divine nature and its mode of subsistence, have involved themselves in endless difficulties.

“ In relation to the Atonement, I have been governed by similar feelings. Having stated our belief that Jesus Christ by his coming, and what he *did and suffered*, HAS placed all men in a capacity to be saved, and that by his Spirit and power in our hearts he is offering us complete redemption and salvation—I have considered it improper to pry into the *secret* counsels of Almighty God, and pretend to tell why and how he prepared the means of redemption which he did.

“ These reasons, I hope, will satisfy the candid inquiring mind, who does not desire to push its inquiries beyond what God is pleased to reveal.”

N.B.—The italics in the preceding quotation are, with one exception, in the book from which they are taken.

ON THE USE OF HUMAN LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS INQUIRIES.

It is a very common error among those of the Calvinistic persuasion, and fostered in their minds by the instructions of their teachers, that there is no use whatever of human learning in religious inquiries; but that the true Christian is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and can at once unravel the greatest intricacy of language, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge. Nor does this by any means express in their whole extent the extravagant notions that many entertain of the Holy Ghost: for they seem almost to think that the Holy Spirit is shed now in all its ineffable richness of spiritual gifts as abundantly as it was on the Apostles. I believe it is hard to convince of this error any that have such extravagant notions of their own qualifications: perhaps one experiment might satisfy them. Hand, to

any of those who may be ignorant of Greek, the New Testament in its original tongue, and ask them to explain the word of life to you. Hand it in Syriac, or Arabic, or French, or Italian—can they explain it in a language that they do not understand? Is this Holy Spirit then, in which they boast, so sparing and confined in its operations as to give them intuitive knowledge in one language and not in another? But what is the reason of this? No other, than that God has made it necessary that we should learn a language before we can understand it; and that every person who can read his New Testament has been at school to learn to read. He there learns the nature of the different kinds of words; the connexion of these in sentences, and so forth. He has in fact been going through a long preparation before he can understand one syllable of the Word of Life. So then *some* preparation is necessary, and God does not vouchsafe to supersede the ordinary process of arriving at maturity of understanding. Now surely if this long and very tiresome preparation is necessary for coming at the meaning of any of the words of the New Testament, a preparation of reason is necessary for seeing the dependence of one argument upon another—of the conclusion upon the premises;—or does God leave us so long to labour in acquiring preparatory knowledge, and then all at once render this unnecessary, by giving us a miraculous insight into his will? Such a miracle was wrought on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, because they had no time to wait—their services were immediately required—thousands were in Jerusalem of different tongues, who could not come to any knowledge of what had passed, if Peter and the other Apostles had to begin and learn their different languages. Therefore was this miracle wrought, and the benefits attending sufficiently great to justify it. These people of different tongues were from all parts of the habitable world, and on the point of returning to their respective homes, whither they were by this miracle enabled to carry the report of what they heard. But to expect that God should render it necessary for us to cultivate our powers to a certain extent before we can know any thing of his will, and then render all exercise of understanding fruitless in the most important part of the pro-

cess, is just as unreasonable as to think that he will allow us to till the ground and sow the seed, and then place our food immediately on our tables, without our reaping the harvest or grinding the corn. The truth is, that our Heavenly Father has blessed us with understandings as he has with eyes and hands and feet; and we may as well expect the one gift to be suspended as the other. We may as well expect a lame man to outrun the sound one, as the prejudiced, unimproved mind to discern what the man of sense and improvement can easily perceive and know. We may as well expect the man who has thrown dust in his eyes to see clearly, as the man who has blinded his understanding to understand aright.

If any one will say that this is a virtual abandonment of the great principle of the sufficiency of the Bible in instructing us what we are to believe, and what we are to do to be saved?—I answer, no. All that any need know, be they small or great, wise or foolish, learned or unlearned, in order to attain unto righteousness, sobermindedness, and piety here, and to Eternal happiness hereafter, is written in characters so clear, that he who runs may read. But to say that every sentence in the New Testament is perfectly perspicuous, is but to expose one's self to be laughed at for presumption, or pitied for ignorance; and is in direct contradiction to the Apostle Peter, who admits that there are things in Paul's Epistles that are hard to be understood; and to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who (v. 11.) admits that he was going to speak of things hard to be uttered.

We must admit it as a necessary consequence, from the clearness of the Scriptures in all points necessary to Salvation, and from their containing every particular of the Christian system, about which, we can be at all certain, that any man of a sound understanding, and seriously disposed mind, who had not been prepossessed with any system of doctrines, who had not known Christ at all, would, upon a serious and studious perusal of the sacred volume, attain to the knowledge of all that was essential to be known to constitute him a Christian.

This I think every Protestant must admit. You will observe my limitation, *all that it is essential for him to know, that he may become a Christian*, entitled to all the privileges and heir to the magnificent promises of a heavenly kingdom. It is not necessary to say that all

he knows is essential, for he may and will have deduced many opinions totally unconnected with his Eternal welfare: nor is it necessary to say that he will know all the religious truths that that Holy Book directly conveys or indirectly glances at. I simply mean that he could not, if desirous to know, have passed over any truth essential to his salvation. If he could; then must the Protestant Reformation be given up. The Bible, and the Bible only is the Religion of Protestants, as the renowned Chillingworth has said. There is a fixed limit in the canonical books of Scripture: if you go beyond these, you can fix no limits. Our Protestant brethren, of the Episcopal persuasion, say we will add to the Scriptures the Fathers of the first three centuries—but how will you stop here. The Roman Catholics can use against them the celebrated argument of a Roman Poet, and say—It is very strange and very curious that the precise even number of 300, should comprise all the writers of authority upon religious subjects; that error should have commenced precisely on the first day of the year 301—you will let us add this one year, and say that you will admit all as authority up to the year 301: Well then be it so. But the same argument applies to 302, and we will take it in also—and so on till you come to the Council of Trent, beyond which the Roman Catholic has no desire to take you.

A. B. C.

THE REV. DR. DRUMMOND AND THE REV. JAMES CARLILE.

The "*third edition, with considerable additions,*" of Dr. Drummond's essay on the doctrine of the Trinity, "occasioned by a late controversy between the Rev. Richard T. P. Pope, and the Rev. Thomas Magnire," is now before me. I have just finished the reading of this spirited volume, which is much enlarged and improved, compared with the former editions. Unitarian Christians owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to the Rev. James Carlile of Mary's Abbey, Dublin, for his book on "Jesus Christ the great God, our Saviour," which has been one means of calling forth the eloquent and critical pen of the Rev. William Hamilton Drummond, in the third edition of his learned essay. I question if Mr. Carlile

will much relish the notice which Dr. Drummond has taken of his *inconsistencies*, or that he will offer to the public any explanation or retractation of his polemical incongruities. He is so involved with the heart probing Committee of the General Synod of Ulster, and the good people of Mary's Abbey, that retractation would be ruinous to him; and his reviewer has so clearly depicted the contradictions of his theology, that both the premises and the *inferences* of his own propositions are exhibited in the contending attitudes in which he placed them, and which no explanation can reconcile.

By giving a place in "The Bible Christian" to these remarks, you will oblige

AN ANTI-CALVINIST.

Intelligence.

JOINT ADDRESS OF THE SYNOD OF MUNSTER,— PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM,—AND REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

ON Thursday the 20th Jan. 1831, a joint address was presented to the Marquis of Anglesey, from these three Presbyterian bodies. The Deputation appointed to present the Address, consisted of the following Ministers, besides upwards of twenty Elders and lay gentlemen, Members of the two Synods and the Antrim Presbytery: Dr. Bruce, James Armstrong, H. Montgomery, Joseph Hutton, Doctor Drummond, Nathaniel Alexander, Fletcher Blakely, James Carley, John Mitchel, James Martineau, and John Porter. The Deputation assembled in Eustace-street Meetinghouse, whence they proceeded to the Castle in private carriages belonging to lay gentlemen, members of the Synod of Munster.

The following is a copy of the Address, with his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant's Reply:—

*To his Excellency the Marquis of Anglesey, the Lord
Lieutenant of Ireland.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We appear before you as a Deputation from the Synod of Munster, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, three distinct Presbyterian Bodies ; but agreeing in the maintenance of these principles, to us sacred and indefeasible—the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith; and presiding over Congregations which embrace a considerable portion of the intelligence, property, and respectability of the Protestant Dissenters of Ireland.

We rejoice in the renewed opportunity of congratulating your Excellency on your arrival upon our shores. Attached by principle to our Constitutional Monarch, and to constitutional freedom, we acknowledge a new claim of gratitude to the one, and a new hope for the preservation of the other, in the re-appointment of a Viceroy so eminently qualified to be the pacificator of this agitated land.

We deeply regret that, on your return to Ireland, your Excellency should find that measure of political wisdom and Christian equity, which dignified the close of the late reign, interrupted in its naturally healing operation. But we entertain a generous confidence in his Majesty's present Government, that such further measures of just reform will be devised, as will satisfy the reasonable expectations of the People of these realms ; and we sincerely trust that no portion of our countrymen will long continue to frustrate the benevolent plans of a paternal administration, by chimerical projects tending to violence and disaffection.

Cherishing, both from hereditary descent and from personal conviction, the warmest attachment to the principles of the British Constitution, we feel it to be our duty, at the present crisis, to assure your Excellency of our firm and faithful adherence to the connexion existing between Great Britain and Ireland. We deprecate any measure or attempt tending to relax the bonds of that connexion, being convinced that the interests of both countries are identified, and their prosperity inseparably conjoined.

We assure your Excellency, with grateful satisfaction, that, prompted by duty and inclination, both as subjects and as Christians, we shall use our best exertions to soothe the irritations and promote the harmony of our country. It is our fervent prayer that Almighty

God may avert dissension and all other calamities from our native land, and grant success to such measures as your Excellency may adopt for promoting the peace, the prosperity, the permanent and substantial interests of the United Kingdom.

(Signed in the name and on behalf of our respective Synods and Presbytery.)

EDWARD KING, Moderator of the Synod of Munster.

WILLIAM BRUCE, D. D., Moderator (P. T.) of the Presbytery of Antrim.

HENRY MONTGOMERY, Moderator (P. T.) of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.

To which his Excellency was pleased to make the following Reply :—

You could not have given me a higher gratification than by embodying, in the Address with which you have honoured me, sentiments which I am proud to share with you.

I acknowledge the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of human authority in matters of Faith.

Firmly attached to that which I profess, I unhesitatingly respect the conscientious opinions of those of a different creed.

It is the duty of Man to live in amity with Man; and to cultivate a kindly intercourse with his neighbour.

Again, I concur with you, in the disappointment you express, that Ireland has not yet received from the measure of justice conferred upon the Catholic population, all the advantages that are derivable from that act of “political wisdom and Christian equity.”

But let us not despair. The great cause of religious feud is removed. It is true, another not less furious source of agitation has been raging. This will subside. I say more—it is subsiding.—There is nothing to prop it. Reason, national interest—general policy is against it. England and Ireland must stand or must fall together.

This is the sentiment of every disinterested and reflecting mind; of those who think for themselves, and who are not led away by the insidious sophistry of men, who, under the garb of patriotism, are the bitterest enemies of Ireland.

The sentiments you have so forcibly expressed of attachment to the King, and of a determination to support the Constitution and the integrity of the Empire, cannot fail to be highly acceptable to our most gracious Sovereign.

In respect to the flattering assurance of your confidence in my government, I will only say that it will be my anxious care to deserve it ; and whilst the legislature will be industriously occupied in devising measures for the general interests of the Empire, it will be my duty, as it is my inclination, to promote, by every means within my power, the peace, the comfort, and the prosperity of Ireland.

ANGLESEY.

20th Jan, 1831.

We regard these two documents as of very great importance, particularly at the present moment. The public will recollect, that the men from whom the above Address proceeds, have been the uniform and unshrinking advocates of independence, and liberal principles ; and that most of them have, through a hot ordeal, *proved* the sincerity of the sentiments which they avowed. Their rejection of the right of their fellows to restrain the free outgoings of the human mind, brought down upon them a storm of persecution, from which they were enabled to escape only by nobly erecting the standard of religious freedom, under which they might cherish those rights that are alike the birthright of all men. As politicians, so far as they publicly took part in questions of a political nature, they have been equally the friends of liberty ; and we believe there is not a man of them, or of the influential community whom they represent, who was not favourable to the great measure of Ireland's regeneration, which placed all her people, of all creeds, on an equality, as citizens of the British empire. And now, when they go before the Representative of Royalty, they hold the same independent and manly bearing which previously marked their lives. Conscious of the soundness and justice of those great principles to which we have referred, they put them plainly and boldly forward, as the distinguishing characteristics of their public lives. Those fundamental doctrines of right, for the advocacy of which they were subjected to injury and loss, are placed in the foreground. Catholic Emancipation is spoken of with gratitude ; and Parliamentary Reform is urged with all the earnestness that is compatible with the forms of such a document. Are these men hostile to the interests of their country ? Are those

the sentiments which generally emanate from the advocates of oppression? Do we recognize, in such opinions and principles, the “hypocrites, and slaves, and recreants,” who ought to be marked out for abhorrence, as unworthy the character of Irishmen? Do these men—the advocates of freedom, amid calumnies, insults, and injuries—the uncompromising friends of liberty to *all* men of *all* denominations—the representatives of one of the most enlightened and liberal portions of the community—and having no interest distinct from that of the nation at large—do these men offer any claims to deference for their opinions respecting the public good?

The reply of the Marquis of Anglesey deserves to be hailed, by all lovers of equal rights, as a proud indication of the progress of their cause. We do not so much allude to his sound ideas respecting the true interests of Ireland, as distinguished from those pernicious measures which men, “under the garb of patriotism,” but who are the “bitterest enemies” of our country, would force on us; but more particularly to the expressions of genuine liberality in which he has fully recognized and vindicated the indefeasible privileges of all men to hold, unmolested, their own peculiar religious sentiments. We look on these facts, as constituting one of the strongest guarantees of the overwhelming progress of justice and liberality, which our country has, for a long time, witnessed. They are deserving of being hailed with enthusiasm, by all independent minds, of whatever creed; but to the religious bodies immediately concerned, they ought to be peculiarly cheering.—*Abridged from the Northern Whig.*

RETIREMENT OF DR. BRUCE.

Dr. Bruce being obliged, by the decay of his sight, to retire from the duties of Officiating Minister in the First Presbyterian Congregation, intimated by letter his intention of resigning the Pastoral office, expressing his wish to discharge any occasional duties that might be required of him; and stating that he was then in the 74th year of his age, the 52d of his Ministry, and the 41st of his Pastoral charge over that Congregation.—In consequence of this intimation, the Members of the Congregation were convened after public worship on

Sunday last; and the following affectionate answer to his letter was unanimously agreed upon:—

“ Belfast, Sunday, 30th January, 1830.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“ We, the Members of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Belfast, this day assembled, having had your affectionate letter of the 21st inst. submitted to us by the Committee, cannot avoid expressing our sincere regret, that the increasing infirmities of age, and especially the failure of sight, have rendered it necessary for you to resign the active duties of the Pastoral office, which you have so long dignified by your eminent talents and exemplary virtues.

“ While we deeply lament the afflicting visitation which deprives us of the more active services of a Minister so highly respected and beloved, it is a consolation to learn from your letter, that it is your intention still to remain among us in the venerable character of our Senior Minister, taking your place as usual at our Sacramental Table, and discharging such occasional private Ministerial duties as you may be enabled to perform. We trust that the Almighty will be pleased long to permit you to appear among us in this interesting relation; and that He may grant to your declining years, the enjoyment of ease and tranquillity in the society of your family and friends.

“ In reviewing the long period (now upwards of forty years) during which you have been connected with our Congregation, and the striking events, religious and political, that have marked its progress; we cannot refrain from expressing our admiration and respect for your consistent, dignified, and virtuous conduct in the most critical times, and on the most trying occasions.

“ As a Minister of the Gospel, you have, from the pulpit and in your writings, zealously maintained and enforced those great and leading principles which unite us; inculcating your views of religious truth, as contained in the Holy Scriptures; and while claiming for yourself and your hearers the right of private judgment and the rejection of human authority in matters of faith, you have freely allowed to others the liberty you have exercised yourself.

“ In concluding this letter, we desire to express our warmest wishes and prayers for your welfare and happiness, temporal and eternal.

“ *Signed in the name and on behalf of the Congregation, by the following Members of Committee :*

“ <i>Robert Callwell,</i>	<i>James Stavely,</i>
<i>William Tennent,</i>	<i>John Hodgson,</i>
<i>John H. Houston,</i>	<i>William Boyd,</i>
<i>Edward Smith,</i>	<i>Charles Creek,</i>
<i>Robert M'Cluney,</i>	<i>P. L. Munster,</i>
<i>Samuel S. Thomson, M.D.</i>	<i>Thomas Chirmside,</i>
<i>Henry Joy,</i>	<i>John Riddel,</i>
<i>John Currell,</i>	<i>Alexander M'Donnell,</i>
<i>Hugh M'Calmont,</i>	<i>James Bristow,</i>
<i>Robert Delap,</i>	<i>William Patterson.'”</i>

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VOL. II.

*On the knowledge of "the only true God," as reconciling
the world unto himself," by the Son "of his love."*

(Continued from page 11.)

I trust, Sir, that from the evidence of the preceding facts and observations, it will appear to be a tolerably clear and just conclusion, that the modern system of Theological doctrine, which has assumed to itself the exclusive title of "Orthodoxy," has little claim to that character as indicating a divinely accredited system of truth. For, in point of fact, it cannot decide whether God be one eternally, self-existent, and omnipotent being, or if there are not three beings, who either conjointly or separately sustain those characteristics of Deity; and thus does the system fail in its attempts to ascertain the very first principle of all theology. And hence we are constrained to conclude that its votaries "worship they know not what;" and the only appropriate inscription I could recommend to be engraven on their altars is that which the Apostle Paul found at Athens—viz.: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

But, Sir, we should grossly impugn and vilify both the wisdom and the love of God, were we for a moment to imagine that the revelation he hath given us of himself could either lead us to or terminate in such a chaos of confusion, such a Babel of contradiction, as this same "Orthodoxy" presents to our view, and would force upon our consciences.* Thanks be to their divine author, the oracles of inspiration do no such thing. It is true, there are secrets in the mode of the existence of God, and mysteries in the operation of his attributes, as well as in the dispensations both of his providence and grace, which no human mind can pretend either to

* *Vide* the Athanasian Creed; in which all the absurdity, self-contradiction, and intolerance of the Orthodox System are most admirably concentrated.

comprehend or to fathom; nay, every branch and every operation of nature, not excepting those of our own bodies and souls, and their ineffable union, all have their *arcana* of mystery, which bid defiance to the human intellect to penetrate or develop. But these are not the subjects of revelation. Those secret things, indeed, “belong to God, but that which is revealed, to us, and to our children;” that we may thereby become “wise unto salvation.” Revelation is given to us as a guide to the knowledge of its divine author; because it is in that knowledge our hopes of eternal life must be founded. We can neither acceptably worship, nor conciliate the favour of an “unknown God;” and without both these, our salvation would be impossible. Hence the important testimony of my motto, “And this is life eternal, that they might know THEE, the only true God.”

Let us, therefore, in the second place, attempt, by the unerring light of revelation, in unison with the concurrent testimony of that reason which it never contradicts,† and under the gracious and illuminating influence of that Holy Spirit who dictated the oracles of divine inspiration, to ascertain, first, who is “the only true God,” and secondly, by what means we can obtain access to him, and conciliate his favour. Nor shall we have occasion to travel far to obtain the knowledge we are in quest of; for the word is nigh us, even in our heart, in our hand, and in our mouth; and if we confess it, and believe it, and obey its precepts, we shall be saved.

Who then is “the only true God?” The Scriptures reply, “No man hath seen *this* God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” And what is his declaration? That the only true God is *his* GOD and FATHER. Both in principle and in practice he hath established this important and fundamental truth; and he hath enforced its belief and effect upon all his disciples, both by his

† It is a remarkable fact, that while the Rev. Richard Watson, one of the most popular of the *Orthodox* Theologians of the present day, strenuously defends the doctrines of the “Trinity in unity,” and of the “hypostatical union of two natures in one personal Christ,” he candidly confesses that “they are both contradictory to human reason!”

precepts and his example. For while he thus declared his Father to be the *only true God*, he was himself in the act of *worshipping him* as such; and the same Scriptures assure us, that "he left us an example that we should tread in his steps." The true disciple of Jesus, therefore, worships the same God whom he worshipped; and it is his consolation to know, that he also stands in precisely the same relation to that God in which his Redeemer stood when upon earth; for that Redeemer, after his resurrection from the dead, sent this kind message to his disciples, "Go unto *my brethren* and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." Both these appellations are relative expressions, and they indicate the natural and official connexion and authority attached to them: but as both paternity and despotic authority may be possessed by inferior beings, so neither of the terms, FATHER, or GOD, is limited to the great and supreme Creator of all things. Hence it is said in the same scriptures, "For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many and Lords many;) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Thus men may constitute whom and what they please to be *their Gods*; i. e. the objects of their supreme desire, their confidence, or their adoration: and accordingly, some make a God of their belly; others of their money; and others again make Gods of evil spirits, and of various animals; of the images of idols, and of creatures existing only in their own corrupt imaginations. But to genuine christians, the God who was acknowledged, published, and worshipped by the Lord Jesus Christ, is "the only true God;" and HE *alone* is by them also acknowledged, proclaimed, and worshipped as such.

It is certain that this God is but ONE *spirit*; and that consequently HE does not consist of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, blended together in hypostatical unity: but HE is the FATHER *alone*. No fact can be more clearly demonstrated than this is in the important texts above quoted. In John xvii. 3, where the Son of God is himself the speaker, the designating epithet is the singular pronoun THEE; "*thee*, the only true God."

The only person here addressed is the Father of the speaker; for in verse 1, he saith, “*Father* the hour is come, glorify *thy Son*, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” No words can convey stronger demonstrations of personal distinction, accompanied with a community of essence, than those relative terms of Father and Son; for it is most certain that no being in the universe can be either his own Father or his own Son; and it is equally certain that every Son must partake of the essential nature of his progenitor; although it by no means follows from thence that every son must inherit all the attributes or qualities of his Father, in an equal degree of perfection with that Father. The divine nature, as well as the human, which “is the image and glory of God,” (1 Cor. xi. 7,) is susceptible of propagation in its essential qualities of spiritual vitality, purity, immortality, understanding, will, and affections; and a portion of the attributes of wisdom, power, benevolence, and holiness, are also capable of transmission by generation; but the original inherent, eternal, and independent *self-possession* of those attributes in their infinite perfection, cannot be propagated; nor can the prerogative of universal dominion be possessed, except by delegation, by any being but the only true God: and hence we find even the only begotten Son of God soliciting, obtaining, and acknowledging the receipt of all his glory, power, and dominion from the Father; from whom also, he expressly says he has derived his very existence.† With all this weight of unanswerable evidence before him, I should be inclined to brand that man, with the character of an obstinate and bigotted heretic, in rejecting the truth, and a volunteer in the faith which embraces, defends, and cleaves to falsehood, well knowing it to be such, who does not believe that “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is alone “the only true God:” and that Jesus Christ is himself the Son and missionary agent of that God. For the man who will not believe those divinely revealed propositions, which lie at the very foundation of all christian theology, *does*

† See these great and important truths clearly and unanswerably revealed in the following passages of Scripture: John v. 26, 30, vi. 57.—xi. 41, 42. xiv. 10. xvii. 5.—Matt. xxviii. 18.—1 Cor. xv. 24. to 28.—2 Cor. xiii. 4.—Ephes i, 17, to 23.—Phillip ii. 6, to 11. Heb. i. 5, to 9. Rev. iii. 21,

not believe the Scriptures; and, notwithstanding all his pretensions to "Orthodoxy," he is a *real infidel*, and no disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; who, it is certain, always enforced, both by his *precept* and *example*, the worship of his Father alone, as the only true God.

As "the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Ephes i. 17, Heb. i. 9, Rev. iii. 12,) the Father must be his superior; and as his *Father*, (John i. 14, xx. 17, Ephes i. 3,) he must be the author of his existence, and consequently must have preceded him in that existence. These predicates preclude the possibility of the Son of God being a constituent portion of the Father's Godhead; and demonstrate the sole Deity of the latter, beyond the possibility of refutation. But of the Son it is affirmed that "he is the first begotten of every creature;" (Coloss. i. 15.) and "the beginning of the creation of God," (Rev. iii. 14,)—"the spirit of truth" hath recorded the first of these statements; and "the faithful and true witness," i. e. Jesus Christ himself, the second; these witnesses agree in their testimony, which, if it means any thing, proves the second person in the Trinity to be the first created,* or produced offspring of the first person; who is, consequently, the only self-existent being in the universe, and therefore "the only true God." In the mouth of two such witnesses, surely the truth must be established; and nothing but "Orthodoxy" in league with infidelity, can have the audacity to reject their testimony!

Having thus, I trust, demonstrated the sole Deity of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as established upon an immovable basis, let us now, as proposed, attempt to discover by what means we can obtain access to him, and conciliate his favour. According to the plan of human redemption and salvation, laid down in the oracles of divine inspiration, it became necessary that a system of religion should be established "in the hands of a Mediator," (Gal. iii. 19,) who should be the medium of reconciling the fallen and apostate race of Adam to God. And as, in the wisdom of the divine

* The Greek words, rendered *creature* in Coloss. i. 15, and *creation* in Rev. iii. 14, do not imply the production of their objects *out of nothing*; but, as explained by *prototokos*, the first begotten or first born, in Coloss. i. 15,—they indicate the divine generation of the Son of God, who is therefore of the same essence with the Father.

economy, the justice of God demanded the sacrifice of an expiatory victim of the human race, declaring that "without shedding of blood," there could be "no remission of sin;" (Heb. ix. 15, 22,) so the power and love of God both provided and bestowed upon us a competent "mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5. And we are assured from the highest possible authority, that no man can come, acceptably, to the Father, but by him; that through him all mankind may have access to, and find acceptance with God; and finally, that he is "able to save to the uttermost all who do come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." *

That the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ was vicarious, and, as such, was accepted as a propitiatory atonement to the justice of God, for the sins of mankind, is, in my opinion, not only an indubitable fact, confirmed by innumerable texts of Scripture, † but also a most important and fundamental principle in christian theology, and the basis of all our hopes of salvation. It was prefigured by the whole Jewish ceremony, the sacrificial rites of which could have neither object nor use, but as they typified the great atoning sacrifice of the Son of God: and the cordial belief of this fact, issuing in a firm reliance on the mercy of God, displayed through this medium, to every penitent sinner, appears to be the great condition or medium of human salvation, ‡ (see Mark xvi. 15, 16—Rom. x. 6, 13—1 Peter i. 18, 23,) Moreover the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit are eminently, if not exclusively, promised to the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John xiv. 12. 16. 17.)

Strange, however, as it may appear, such is the fact, that although the "Orthodox" profess to believe and teach the preceding principles, as the fundamental doctrines of christianity, they effectually pervert and

* John vi. 37. 44, 45, 46—Ephes. ii. 13, 18—Heb. vii. 25—Ibid. xiv. 6.

† To refer only to a very few, see Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11—1 Cor. v. 7—Rom. iv. 25—1 Peter ii. 21, 24—I John ii. 2.

‡ On this part of the subject, as well as on some others, we differ widely in opinion from our respected correspondent, but in justice to him we allow his sentiments, many of which we admire, to go to the world with his own qualifications.

EDITORS.

overthrow them by their unscriptural ascription of *supreme* GOD-HEAD to the second person of the Trinity, the only begotten Son of God ; who, when incarnated, was "the man Christ Jesus." By this means *they deprive their system of a mediator* ; and thus do they, as far as in them lies, sap the foundation of the christian religion, and subvert the whole economy of human redemption. For it is most certain, that if the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, be himself "the only true God," HE never suffered for human transgression ; nor is there, in that case, any mediator between God and men. For, as St Paul justly observes, (Gal. iii. 20,) "A mediator is not a mediator of one ; but God is one : " that is, in all cases of mediation, there must be two parties who are to be reconciled ; but as God is but one being, and also one of the contending parties, so to speak, who were at variance, and whose reconciliation is the object of the mediation, so the mediator must be a being, distinct from both parties. Common sense, as well as divine revelation, tells us this : but upon the hypothesis of the "Orthodox," that Jesus Christ is the only true God, I challenge them to show in their whole system, any mediator between *that* God and men. Their friends the Papists alone can help them out of this dilemma ; and to them they must go for a mediator. It is true *they* cannot spare the virgin Mary, no, not even to accommodate their *new friends* of the Protestant Orthodox association ; but they have a ~~whole~~ calendar of minor Saints to spare ; and of these I dare say they may get some dozens, now that "conciliation" is the watchword of harmony between the two churches !

But all these cannot supply the place of the "one" divinely appointed "Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus," whom the Orthodox have rejected from, and disqualified for, that office, by transforming him into the "the supreme God." The truth is, the profundity of these gentlemen's Orthodoxy has plunged them and their system into a labyrinth of incomprehensible absurdity, and self-contradiction, out of which it is impossible to extricate them by any other means but by demolishing their preposterous and unscriptural dogmas ; while the *sublimity* of their "mysteries" has elevated them to an atmosphere in which common

sense expires, and where truth and wisdom refuse to follow them! They tell you an idle tale, an "old wife's fable," the twin sister of *transubstantiation*, about a Saviour, who is "both God and man in one person;" but who being, according to their own account of him, an hypostatical mixture of both, can be *neither one nor the other*.* Yet they first tell you he is "*a perfect God*;" and consequently he is incapable of suffering; and then that he is, "*a perfect man*," and, consequently, *a created being*, and therefore incapable of enduring the penalty due to human transgression. Thus, with all his qualities, he is, by their own confession, incapable of redeeming mankind. But if you ask them whence the human soul of this "perfect man," was derived, and how it stands generically indented with the race of Adam, and yet free from the contamination of the hereditary corruption which they say pervades and pollutes that whole race, they are totally at a loss for an answer; it is "*a mystery*," which they know nothing at all about! Thus *ignorance* is the real and avowed "mother of their devotion," and the only *explainer* of their mysteries!

From an absurd idea that the justice of God required an *infinite* satisfaction, in the form of penal sufferings, as an atonement for the *finite* transgressions of men, those sapient theologians set themselves to work to fabricate a being, who should unite in his one person two natures, subsisting in two spirits, incorporated in

* Were this hypothesis true, it would command our most perfect concurrence, and reverential deference; but, considered as it really is, a pure human invention, a *chimera*, existing only in the perverted imaginations of its deluded authors, I conceive myself justifiable in attempting its illustration from the only *parallel case* I am acquainted with in nature. It is true, the parties concerned in this case, are not of the most *illustrious* order of beings, yet still they form a part of the creation of God, and are the best adapted of any, in my knowledge, to elucidate the point at issue. The only "hypostatical union" which I know to subsist between any two animated beings, is exemplified in the generation of a *mule*; which is the offspring of two distinct species of animals; and consequently, while it partakes of the nature of both, it is, in fact, *neither one nor the other*. This, I grant, is properly an "hypostatical union," but it is the only one I know of in the universe. Let those who can do it, exhibit any other, without a corresponding issue.

one body, one of whom was *incapable of suffering at all*, and the other equally incapable of suffering a ten thousandth part of the required penalty: yet they would fain persuade us that *the composition* contrived to suffer the whole! In furtherance of this hopeful scheme, its authors tell us, that one of those embodied spirits was either the eternal God, or a *third part* of that God; (they know not which, for—"it is all a mystery!") but let him be which he may, it is certain HE can have nothing whatever to do with either suffering the penalty, or making the atonement: for, according to the testimony of the scheme itself, it is God that *requires* the satisfaction, and must *receive* it; and consequently he cannot *give* it. Common sense, if permitted to speak, will tell us, that it is the most ridiculous piece of folly to make the same being the *payer* and the *payee* of a debt or obligation; such a transaction would evidently neutralize and nullify itself, and, consequently, it would be perfectly *nugatory* and *unavailing*; therefore, to impute such egregious and contemptible folly to the wisdom of God, as the only means it could devise for satisfying the claims of his justice, is to suppose him actually destitute of common sense; and to represent him as counteracting and nullifying his own actions, trifling with his most exalted attributes, and exposing his noblest transactions, and most profound counsels, to the contempt and ridicule of his creatures! Such is the issue of the scheme of modern "Orthodoxy," in its matchless effrontery and ignorance, while attempting to *mix up the Deity* with a man, as one *component part* of a fabricated, *complex* being; and as the agent, or victim of human redemption.

As there is not one word of truth in this wretched and unscriptural scheme, it becomes necessary, for the honour of christianity, and the glory of its divine author, not only to purge its sacred archives from the imputation of such impious folly, which has too long made it the laughing stock of infidels, and excited the contemptuous hostility of Jews and Mahomedans; but also, to shew from the direct evidence of Scripture, who the Saviour of the world really is; how he stands connected with both the parties, whose reconciliation was the object of his divine mission; and the peculiar qualifications he possessed, to enable him to effect that reconciliation. The records,

upon which the certainty of these important facts rests, lie within a very narrow compass, and are in every man's hands.

In the first place, as to the person of the Redeemer of the world, beyond all controversy he is *the Son of God*; for thus it is written, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" (John iii. 16.) He is therefore not God himself, but the *offspring* of God, and as such, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his hypostasis: (Heb. i. 3,) for God always possessed the same power which he gave to man, although it never pleased him to exert it, but once, viz. that of "begetting a son in his own likeness." In point of primogeniture this son takes precedence of the whole creation, for he is "the first begotten of every creature:" (Coloss. i. 15,) and "the beginning of the creation of God:" (Rev. iii. 14.) And being thus, "in the form of God," he was the agent, *by whom* God created all things, and produced all other beings; as is expressly testified in John i. 1, 2; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Coloss i. 16; Heb. i. 1, 2. Moreover, as the first born being of the universe "he is appointed heir of all things:" Heb. i. 2. Yet it is certain that as the offspring of God he cannot be God himself; nor, consequently, possessed of any of the attributes of Deity, except such as are, in their nature and degree, susceptible of communication by divine generation. The precise character and extent of these, not being the subjects of revelation, no man can pretend to ascertain; but we know in general, they are not *infinite*; because, in reference to them all, the Son of God declares the Father to be *greater than he*: (John xiv. 28.) Nor are they too great to prevent the located incarnation of their possessor; or his subjection to sufferings, temptation, and death. Yet his nature and dignity are so great, that he is both competent and entitled to wield the sceptre of universal dominion, though always under the paramount authority of the Father: (1 Cor. xv. 24. 28.)—Thus does the Saviour of mankind stand both naturally and officially related to God; and this was necessary, to give him the right of mediating with God, and to impart weight and efficacy to his mediation. So far, therefore, his claim to the office of mediator is clear and satisfactory.

But there was another important qualification necessary to complete his mediatorial character; viz. he must become a *perfect man*; for it was impossible that the justice of God could accept a sacrificial atonement for sin, in or from any other nature, than that in and by which the transgression was committed. Moreover the victim of that atonement must be the federal head of mankind, to constitute him the acceptable and judicial representative of the whole race. That Jesus Christ actually sustained that character, is evident, from the express testimony of the Holy Scriptures; which state, that as *in Adam* all die, so *in Christ* shall all be made alive: "and since *by man* came death, *by man* came also the resurrection from the dead." For as the first *man* was of the earth, earthy, and with him originated and from him proceeded all other human bodies, so "*the second man* was the Lord from heaven," and with him originated and from him proceeded all other human souls; it being certain that there is *one God*, and one mediator between God and men, "*the man Christ Jesus*,"* who consequently represented the whole race in his mediation. Hence "it is written, the *first man Adam*, was made a living soul, the *last Adam* was (himself) a quickening spirit."†

And this federative character possesses a gracious moral influence as well as a carnal and a spiritual representation; for it is also written: "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.—For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous."‡ In these important passages the federative characters of both Adam and Jesus Christ, are clearly recognized; and the benefits flowing to the human race from the latter, are successfully opposed to the injury sustained by the effects of the former.

In all the predicates exhibited in the preceding quotations, the proper manhood of the Son of God is clearly manifest, and is in fact the only basis upon which the argument, in every instance, is or can be founded. But

* 1 Cor. xv. 21. 22. 47.; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† 1 Cor. xv. 45.

‡ Rom. v. 18, 19.

what, I ask, could *constitute him a man*? Not his miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin; not his consequent birth, as the animating spirit of a human body: these were necessary circumstances, indeed, to the *completion* of his human nature, but they were not the primary source of his union with the human family. Man is a compound being, consisting of a human soul united with a human body; therefore to constitute the Son of God a man, he also must be a human soul, and that soul must be incorporated in a human body. * Moreover all human souls belong to one family, all spring from one common progenitor; and in the course of natural generation they are all propagated with the body: (See Gen. xlv. 26.) To *produce* a human soul, therefore, since the creation of Adam and Eve, the union of the sexes is necessary; but the Son of God had no human Father, and consequently, he derived no human soul from that source. Hence it is plain, that if he was not himself a *human soul*, before his incarnation, that incarnation could not have constituted him a man.

This is one of the deepest mysteries, and at the same time one of the most interesting truths connected with the christian religion, and the redemption of the world: it demands our closest attention, united with the profoundest reverence and highest respect, as developing the original dignity of man, his high relation to God, his glorious destiny, and the true cause of the incarnation and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, on his behalf. The egregious blunders of "Orthodoxy" arise entirely from its deplorable ignorance of the important fact, of the original humanity of the Son of God; but which is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures of truth, as his subsequent incarnation; a circumstance which never would have taken place but as a

* The "Orthodox" scheme pretends to constitute the Son of God a man, by *giving him* a human soul and body, with which they attempt to *identify* him by an hypostatical union: but this is a mere human contrivance, and one that fails in every point. Rational beings cannot be identified with each other by union; if they could, God might thus be transformed into a man, and a man into God: and, indeed, that appears to be the real principle of "Orthodoxy:" it preposterously supposes the same being, nay the same person, to be by identification both God and man! A sentiment worthy of the darkest ages of the Heathen mythology or Popish idolatry!

consequence of his previous generical indentity with the race of Adam.

Without this key the following passages of Scripture have no meaning:—"Go to *my brethren* and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*; (i. e. all of one family, the offspring of one common Father; and consequently partakers of one common nature;) for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) "For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be *the first born among many brethren*." (Rom. viii. 29.) "I Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the *root*, and the offspring of David." (Rev. xxii. 16.)

All these texts refer directly to the generical and specific indentity of the Lord Jesus Christ with the race of Adam, of which he is the *spiritual root*, and "elder brother." According to the flesh, he is *the offspring* of David, (Rom. i. 3.) but in his spiritual generation he is *the root* from whence the stock of Adam, and David among the rest, derived their origin. According to this testimony, the order of human generation is as follows: God, i. e. the Father, begat his *Monogenes*, i. e. his only begotten Son, the Divine Logos; (John i. 14.) from him proceeded, by an act of spiritual emanation, the soul of Adam, which was instantly incorporated in a body of flesh and blood. From Adam proceeded both the soul and body of Eve; and from the intercourse of those two proceeded all mankind. Hence saith St Paul to the Corinthians—"I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) This is the Scriptural order of divine generation, by which it is clear that all mankind as well as Jesus Christ are *the offspring of God*. (Acts xvii. 28, 29.—Luke iii. 38.) and the man also is "the image and glory of God;" (1 Cor. xi. 7.)—but we derive all these privileges, not directly from the Father, for this the Logos, as his *Monogenes*, alone hath done; but *mediately* through his

only begotten Son; for "without him was not any thing made that was made." (John i. 3.)

The Logos, therefore, is the connecting link, *through* whom we came originally from God, and *by* whom we are again united to him, by virtue of his vicarious and sacrificial death; but his vicarious character arose entirely from his federative connexion with man; and this was founded in his spiritual paternity, and generic identity with the race of Adam; whence he saith—"Behold me, and the children which God hath given me." (Heb. ii. 13.) But those *children* he acknowledges also to be his *brethren*, as springing from the same common Father, as above noticed. And it is upon this very paternity that St. Paul erects the propriety and necessity of the incarnation of the Logos, when he saith, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Why? "Because *it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*, that through death," (which he could suffer only by incarnation;) "he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil." (Heb. ii. 14, 17.) Hence it is plain that his incarnation did not, as the "Orthodox" suppose, *originate* the fraternity of Christ with man; but it was assumed, as the result of the pre-existence of his *spiritual fraternity* with us, by which, as our elder brother, he became eligible to the character and office of our Redeemer; and he assumed our flesh to *complete* his character as man, and to enable him to die, "the just for the unjust," that he might thereby restore us to the forfeited favour of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SLAVERY.

The deep interest which the people of these countries have taken in the welfare of Slaves, is an honourable feature in our national character. The objects of our sympathy are unhappy beings, destined without any fault to perpetual and hereditary bondage, at the mercy of traders, whose profits depend on their labour, and are enhanced by their sufferings. This renders them objects of compassion and sympathy. But what redounds most to our credit is, that they are removed at an immense distance from our view, and incapable of making us acquainted with their misery; and that we share in the benefit derived from their sufferings and toil.

The consequence of these counteracting feelings of the Planter and the Philanthropist, is, that while one party draws flattering pictures of their comforts, the other indulges in frightful descriptions of their misery. The declarations of both enlarge also upon mercantile and political arguments, with which the Bible Christian, as a Religious Periodical, is not immediately concerned. Omitting, therefore, all these topics, my only object is, in this paper, to protect Revealed Religion from being injured by the intemperate and inconsiderate harangues which are often pronounced at public meetings. These are generally delivered by persons, distinguished for their zealous attachment to Revelation, and often by its professional advocates; yet they consist of such violent and indiscriminate invectives against slave-owners, as place the most illustrious men in Sacred History on a level with the most brutal slave-driver in Jamaica, and expose the Divine Law to the abhorrence of the hearers. For it is a matter of notoriety, that slavery is sanctioned by the law, and permitted, or acquiesced in by the Gospel; the principle on which I mean to account for, and justify this, may appear to many as indefensible as the practice itself. I maintain that slavery is an inherent constitutional evil in human society, a radical and an ineradicable disease in the body politic. It may, and ought to be, mitigated as much as possible, but can never be effectually cured. This, I think, will appear from a review of society in all its stages; but I entreat the reader to keep in mind, that I take no part in the general ques-

tion; nor do I vindicate any of the customs which I shall have occasion to mention. I only state them historically, with a view to show, that the founders of the Mosaical and Christian Religions could not have done otherwise than they have done.

The earliest state of society is the Domestic or Patriarchal; when single families were settled apart, subject only to the head of each family. The first fact that presents itself in the history of this state, is the death of Abel, the murder of one brother by another; but we need not this precedent to convince us, that the peace of families was liable to be disturbed. I may, therefore, be allowed to suppose, that a wandering savage might invade one of these peaceful dwellings, to plunder their property, drive their cattle, or murder one of the inmates, and then been taken prisoner, what is now to be done? The first suggestion would be to put him to death; but this would be an unprofitable act of revenge. The injury would remain unrepaired; shall they release him? Impunity would encourage him to repeat the offence, and invite others to unite with him in similar outrages. There is no mode in which their loss can be repaired, and their security maintained, except compulsory labour, that is slavery, nor would any one blame them for requiring it. Thus says Horace—

*Vendire cum possis captivum occidere noli.
Serviet utiliter.*

There can be no doubt that these independent families would soon find causes of quarrel; for example, with respect to the right of pasture, as happened between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot; and it is not likely, that one of the parties would be as wise, liberal, and condescending, as Abraham. These feuds would soon break out into open hostilities, and some of each family would be taken captive. An exchange of prisoners might then be agreed to; but if the whole or the greater part were on one side, what would be done with the balance? They might be redeemed, but a long time would elapse before this system of exchanges and ransoms would be thought of, or agreed to. In the mean time, the number of slaves would be continually increasing.

These petty broils would soon grow into predatory excursions. Thus, the children of Dan being too much

straitened within the borders assigned them, invaded the people of Laish, "a people" at quiet and secure, having "no business with any man," and without protector or deliverer," being remote from the nearest cities, Tyre and Sidon. Here the captives were all on one side; and the captors would, no doubt, reduce the people of Laish to slavery, according to the usage of ancient times.

At a much earlier period alliances had been formed, and regular wars carried on; and of course prisoners taken, and reduced to bondage. The first precedent was set by Chederlaomer, who, with his allies, subdued five kings; and they "served him twelve years." On his return from the war, he carried with him Lot; but when Abraham heard that his nephew was one among the captives, he pursued and retook him. The other property and captives he considered as belonging to Melchizedek, who accepted of the persons, and no doubt reduced them to slavery.

This continued to be the practice of conquerors till a very late period, even in Europe. In other parts of the world it exists at this day. They never doubted their right to dispose of their prisoners as they thought proper; if they had, it is not easy to devise any more prudent or humane mode of disposing of them, than employing them in compensating by their labour, for the devastation they had brought upon the territory of the victors. But whether or not, slavery was thus perpetuated through all ages and all countries. Even now the peasantry in the vast empire of Russia and other northern states are serfs; and slavery is diffused over the Eastern portion of the world and the continents of Africa and America.

But some one may say, this is true; it is fair that a robber should by his labour repair the injury that he has done. In many cases, his labour even during life may be an inadequate compensation, especially as he must be maintained and clothed by his master; but why should slavery be entailed upon his children? I ask in reply, what else can be done with them, except they be exposed or killed. Abraham had 318 slaves born in his house, the offspring of prisoners of war perhaps; he had supported these from their infancy to manhood. What was to indemnify him for this enormous expense? The labour of their fathers was already pledged; their own

services were the only fund out of which he could be repaid. They were already in debt for life, food, raiment, and the supply of their other wants. This account was still running on; and the surplus of their earnings could never discharge it, their present labour being only equivalent to their present subsistence. The third generation would be born under similar circumstances; and thus hereditary slavery commenced, and has continued to this day. I only state the facts of the case; let others discuss the law and equity.

It is not only in war, that slavery is an unavoidable and necessary evil; it is also practised in civil transactions; offenders are sentenced to labour on the roads; in the galleys and mines; in prisons, and hulks; or transported to the Plantations; often for life. In the most refined nations of antiquity, slavery was inflicted upon debtors, and they were delivered to their creditors till they worked off their debt, or it was discharged by some other means. This may be thought cruel, but it was certainly more rational, than indolent confinement at the expense of the public, or the creditor.—With these points, however, I have nothing to do; I only say, that slavery is a condition which has existed in all places and at all times, and an incurable disease in human society.

The next point in this case will shock the sensibility and excite the indignation of many of my readers, and therefore, I must once more premise, that I only state it as a circumstance in the history of man, which tended to diffuse this practise, and to render the evil irremediable. It would happen, particularly in war, that a man would acquire more slaves than he could employ or maintain—what was to be done in this case; and how would he reason in such a dilemma? He would say, that they were his property, a remuneration for injuries sustained, or payment for debts that they had incurred; and he had a right to apply them to these purposes; some of them were so far from being a benefit, that they would soon become an intolerable burden, when by age or infirmity they became incapable of labour, and might even reduce himself to poverty and servitude. Was there no way to render them profitable? Yes; some of his neighbours were in want of slaves, and would gladly pay him a price for his

supernumeraries. This was the origin of the Slave Trade, which has been the principal means of diffusing and perpetuating slavery; for on this plan a man could not have too many. This barbarous traffic has for several years past been totally banished from the British dominions.

All the practices which I have enumerated were carried to such excess in Rome, Athens, and Sparta, that these renowned cities, so famous for liberty, resembled West Indian plantations. These, however, were cases of inferior magnitude. The Jews and Israelites were not the only nations that were carried wholesale into captivity!

On the whole, I conclude, that slavery, like poverty, labour, oppression, incurable and hereditary distempers, &c. is a calamity, to which men have been always liable; and a condition of life inseparable from human society. Many are the miserable occupations and sufferings, to which some portion of our fellow-creatures seem to be doomed. Whether any of them be as wretched, or less tolerable than slavery, it is not my province to inquire. I only assert, that it is not possible for any system of morals or religion to banish them from human life. Their utmost power is to alleviate the misery, which these calamities occasion.

“The Hebrews had two kinds of servants or slaves. Some were strangers, either bought or taken in war; and their masters kept them, exchanged them, sold them, or disposed of them as their own goods. The others were Hebrews who, being poor, sold themselves, or were sold to pay their debts; or were delivered up for slaves by their parents, in cases of necessity. This sort of Hebrew slaves continued in slavery for six years, or until the ensuing Sabbatical year. Then they might return to liberty again; and their masters could not retain them against their will. If they would continue voluntarily with their masters, they were brought before the Judges. There they made a declaration, that for this time they disclaimed the privilege of the law, had their ears bored with an awl, by applying them to the door posts of their master; and after that they had no further power of recovering their liberty, except at the next year of jubilee;” which occurred only once in 50 years.—*See Levit. xxv. 39; 2 Kings xxi. 1.*

These particulars are taken from Cruden's Concordance, under the word *Servant*.

To these may be added the following:—In the tenth commandment, the man servant and maid servant are classed with the ox and the ass.—A man might strike his servant; but if he smote out his eye or tooth, that servant was entitled to his liberty.—There is mention of a home-born slave, in Jeremiah ii. 14.—In Ezekiel vii. 13. there is mention made of “trade in persons of men;” and in Revelations xxviii. 13. of “merchandize in slaves and souls of men.”—If a thief was not able to make restitution, he was sold for a bondsman; Exod. xxii. 3.—“He that stole a man and sold him, or if he be found in his hand, (and not sold) was surely to be put to death;” Exod. xxi. 16.—In Deut. xxiv. this penalty is limited to those who stole an Israelite and sold him.

The condition of slaves among the later Jews may be seen in Ecclesiasticus xxxiii. 24. “Fodder, a wand and bonds are for an ass: torture and torments for an evil servant. If he be not obedient, put on him more heavy fetters.” The master, however, is to treat him kindly in general, “because he hath bought him with a price,” and lest he should “run away.”

In the second book of Chronicles, (c. xxviii.) there is an account of a transaction which applies to several parts of this subject. The conduct of the Israelites illustrates the general prevalence of slavery: the preaching of Oded shows the great importance of the sacred character, when employed for benevolent ends. The conduct of the elders or chiefmen of Samaria, is a fair example of the interest which men in power should take in alleviating this grievous calamity; and the manner in which the captives were released, and supplied with necessities and comforts, is a noble instance of compassion and generosity in men flushed with victory, exasperated with injuries, and with the losses and suffering inseparable from war. (See 2 Chron. xxviii. 9.)

From what has been said, it appears that slavery was recognized by the law of Moses, and constantly practised by the Israelites and Jews. It is equally plain, that it is neither forbidden nor condemned by the Christian religion.

An incidental mention of servants or slaves, of their

employment, and their punishment by stripes, occurs in the Gospels; and in the Epistles of Paul there are numerous reference to their state, and instructions both to their masters and themselves as to their respective duties. It is evident that the masters were Christians. In one place they are expressly called "believing masters:" to none others could Paul address any exhortations, in his Epistles to the Churches. (See 1 Tim. vi.; Eph. vi. 9.; Philip. iv. 1.) The servants were all, or the greater part of them, slaves. In one text they are described as being under the yoke; 1 Tim. vi. 1. Thus slave-owners and slaves are recognized, without condemnation or reproach by the Apostle. His exhortations to both presuppose a reciprocal obligation and duty; of protection and humane treatment on the part of the master, "give unto your servants that which is just and equitable;" and on that of the slave, fidelity and honesty; "not purloining;" a sincere and hearty obedience; "not with eye-service, as man-pleasers, but as servants of Christ." He is particular in enjoining humility and patience under sufferings and insult, buffeting and abuses, though conscious of their own innocence, and that such treatment is undeserved, and that they are "suffering wrongfully." "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." "If when ye do well ye suffer for it and take it patiently, this is acceptable unto God." See Titus ii. 9. He commands Titus (vi. 1.) to teach servants under the yoke, to count their masters worthy of all honour, that "the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed;" and censures those who teach contrary doctrines. (See Eph. vi. 5.; Philip. iv. 1.)

Philemon had a slave named Onesimus, who deserted his service and fled to Rome, where he was converted by St. Paul. After conversion, Paul sent him back to his master; to secure a favourable reception the Apostle gave him that delicate and persuasive letter, entitled the Epistle to Philemon. From its tenor, it is probable that it was by Paul's recommendation and remonstrance, on the impropriety of his conduct, that he returned to servitude; and from the whole we may conclude, that he did not disapprove of Philemon's having a slave; nor encourage the fugitive in leaving his master, and asserting his liberty.

On the whole, this world is not a state of reward and indulgence, but of trial and probation; and servitude is either an ordinance or permission of Providence for these purposes. The abuse of it, which we call slavery, is owing, like other crimes, to the depravity of man.— This abuse of power should be corrected as far as possible; and the sufferings of the oppressed should be mitigated to the utmost of our power; but, like other evil practices and other species of misery, it cannot be entirely prevented or cured; and therefore, like other enormities arising from similar causes, slavery is not specifically condemned by Revelation; but suffered to continue for similar purposes. War is productive of more general misery and oppression, and the occasion of greater crimes than slavery; yet the military profession is not prohibited in Scripture, either in the commander or the subordinate instrument. The greatest event and most important change that ever occurred in the Christian Church, the extension of gospel privileges to the Heathens, without which we and all the world would still be Pagans and Idolators, took place through the means of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion; a man specially selected by Providence for that end.

In fact, none of the ordinary occupations of mankind are forbidden by our religion. The power of kings has been very generally abused in the most flagitious manner; but never so much so, or on so large a portion of the globe, as in the days of Paul. But government was an ordinance of God, necessary for preserving the frame of society; and therefore, he commands Christians to obey and pray for Magistrates as persons appointed for the punishment of evil doers, and the encouragement and protection of those who do well. Our Lord desired Peter to pay tribute for him; and to give to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's. The Baptist professed to lay the axe to the root of the trees, and yet, when "the soldiers demanded of him, what shall we do?" he was so far from denouncing their profession as unlawful, or exhorting them to abandon it, that he enjoined them to do their duty, and abstain from the vices, to which they were at that time addicted, violence, false accusation, and mutiny: "Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."—The title of Publicans was usually coupled with that of sinners. They

were the instruments of a tyrannical and idolatrous Government, in exacting tribute from God's peculiar people. These also came to John to be baptised, and said unto him, "Master, what shall we do?"—and, far from refusing to receive such disciples, he allowed them to continue in their office, but enjoined them to exact no more than was appointed to them. The Pharisees and Sadducees, the Doctors and Scribes, were the objects of our Lord's severest reprehension, but he never commanded them to renounce their professions. He pronounced woes and execrations against those religious sects for their sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy, for their spirit of proselytism, for imposing on the credulity of women by long prayers, and devouring widows' houses; but though he cautioned his disciples against following their example, he advised them to hear their doctrines and practise their precepts. He exposed the vanity and pride of these officers of the law, in assuming the highest seats, and delighting in pompous titles, and in being styled Rabbi, Rabbi; but cast no aspersion on the legal profession, though grossly abused and perverted in his days.

Notwithstanding the variety of practical instruction with which the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments abound; notwithstanding the perfect purity of our Saviour's precepts, and the vast variety of cases, in common life, to which he had occasion to apply them; and his severe reprehension of the peculiar vices of several classes of men—it does not appear that any employment or station in civil society is reprobated by the Sacred Writers. Men may serve God in them all, and confide in his favour, if they "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly in his sight."

ERASMUS.

INCONSISTENCIES OF CALVINISM.

(By a Country School-Master.)

Calvinism seems to me to be inconsistent with itself as well as with reason and Scripture ; for, according to the assertion of its advocates, an *eternal decree* existed respecting the salvation of that part of mankind, which they call the elect : but according to another assertion of the same persons, this decree could not have been *eternal*, for they tell us, that it was *made*, or entered into. Both of these assertions are found in the Shorter Catechism. Now, were I to affirm, that the world in which we dwell was *eternal*, and also, that it was *made*, should I not be guilty of a glaring contradiction, and of asserting a falsehood ? Two contradictory propositions cannot both be true. Not less guilty of contradiction and mis-statement, are they, who assert that the decrees of God are both *made* and *eternal*.

Again, Calvinists assert, that when Adam sinned, God might have passed by *all* men, and, therefore, that he might then pass by a *part* of mankind. But this appears to me to be quite inconsistent : For, if God at any time might have passed by *all* men, it must have been *before* He elected *some* ; but, according to Calvinism, there never was a *time* before he elected *some*, for it declares, “ that God from *all eternity* elected *some* to everlasting life.” Therefore, there never was a time when He could have passed by all men.

Another inconsistency is, that although, on Calvinistic principles, God never, either desired, or made any provision for a great part of the human race, yet he sends the Gospel to proclaim peace and salvation to those who are Calvinistically reprobated. Such are invited, and urged, to be reconciled to God, that they may be saved ; though at the same time, even Omnipotence itself cannot accomplish their salvation, because there has been no atonement made for them.

Another inconsistency in Calvinism is, that it represents God, at the last day, as judging and passing sentence upon the reprobates, for whom no adequate means of salvation were provided, as if they had in reality once enjoyed the means and rejected them. Calvinists are compelled to own, that the Scriptures assert, that the

finally impenitent will be condemned for not believing in Christ; and yet, according to their own creed, there never was a Saviour *provided* for them, in whom they *could* believe.

Again, Calvinists admit that a man is not guilty of criminality for doing any act, if he be compelled to do it by natural necessity, and the will does not consent; yet, they tell us, that the new-born child is guilty of Adam's first transgression. But according to their own acknowledged principles, how can this be? For, certainly the child, when it sinned, did it by natural necessity, as existing in its root, Adam, and also without the consent of the will; for neither the child, nor any of its faculties, then *actually* existed.

Many Calvinistic inconsistencies might be mentioned, but I shall conclude by stating only another. Calvinists represent men as mere passive machines, which cannot act but as they are irresistibly impelled to action; and they admit that Christ, and his Apostles, and the Scriptures, urge such persons "*to work* while it is called to-day," and that they shall be doomed to eternal flames, if they refuse. How inconsistent! how absurd! As well might the farmer commit his plough to the flames for not tilling his ground, while at the same time he neither put horses to it, nor held it—the only means adequate for putting the plough in proper motion. But I am making an absurd supposition, when I represent the husbandman as calling upon a mere machine to labour, and punishing it for refusing; yet such is the absurdity of Calvinists. They represent man as a being that *cannot* act but as irresistibly impelled, and yet, that if he *do* not act without this irresistible impulse, he shall be consigned to eternal destruction.

By the Overtures of the General Synod of Ulster, all their Ministers *must* preach, and all their people *must* hear, such wonderful, contradictory doctrines: not one of which, I could ever find in the Bible.

A. B. C.

ORTHODOXY SAFE AND SUSTAINING IN THE HOUR OF DEATH.

To the Editor of the Bible Christian.

Sir,—There is a piece of declamation under the above title in No. XVI. of “The Orthodox Presbyterian;” and if the doctrine therein inculcated were universally acted on, the world would, in a short time, become a complete sink of the most monstrous abominations. The dying sinner is there directed to trust to the *sacrifice* of Jesus, as the soul’s *only* sure dependance, its *only* screen from wrath,—the *only* ground on which it can take its stand with safety and acceptance before the Judge of all—it then dreads no condemnation, because it knows that through the *blood of expiation* “it is *justified from every charge.*” Not a word about the necessity of *repentance*, that prominent doctrine of the entire Bible—not a word about the importance of *holiness*, “without which no man shall see the Lord,” (Heb. xii. 14;) every thing depends on believing, and the sole object of this belief is the efficacious shedding of our Saviour’s blood. The feeling and sentiment of the whole article under consideration, seems to be taken from the following stanza, which is widely circulated in what are miscalled religious tracts, and which appears to me to contain as much senseless blasphemy as could be well compressed into so many lines—

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Are wash’d from all their stains.”

Is it any wonder, Sir, when such doctrines are taught and sent abroad to the world, by sage, grave, “Orthodox Presbyterians;” is it any wonder, an ignorant felon at the gallows’ foot, should declare that he felt his soul filled with the Holy Ghost, and that he had no doubt whatever of his salvation? Truly, “Orthodoxy is safe and sustaining,” accompanied with no reproaches of conscience; with no sorrow for sin; with no contrition of spirit; with no humiliation of the heart; with no tearful prayers for forgiveness; but bold, daring, and confident—depending, that in the *sacrifice* of Jesus the *penalty* of the law is inflicted to the *utmost*, (on an inno-

cent, pure, and spotless being, who never transgressed that law;) and yet, by that *infliction*, "the fulness of pardon is extended to the *guilty*." In support of this doctrine, the writer quotes abundance of Scripture, but he might as well have opened the Bible at random, and transcribed whatever portion presented itself, for what he has adduced, yields him no succour, nor has it any connexion with the subject. What assistance, indeed, could he receive from that Sacred Volume, where the great God of the universe calls on the "wicked man to *forsake* his wicked ways, and the unrighteous man to *forsake* his unrighteous thoughts; to be holy, for he is holy; and to *turn* and live, for he hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth;" (Is. lv. 7; Ez. xviii, 32 :) where the Son of his love declares that "not every one that *saith* Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of his father who is in heaven;" (Matt. vii, 27.) or where the Apostle pronounces the sentence of "*indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, and asserts that he endeavoured to keep his body under, lest while preaching to others he might himself be *cast away*;" (Rom. ii. 8, 9; 1 Cor. ix. 27.)

But why, Sir, need we talk of such things? "The Orthodox Presbyterian" believes in the doctrines of Election and Reprobation; let him come forward then on this Calvinistic ground, and tell the host of his readers, whom he appears willing to save a world of trouble, that their destiny was fixed from all eternity, and that they cannot think or act in any other way, than in that which was decreed for them; that the number of the elect, and of the reprobate, is made up, and cannot be increased or diminished; and that virtue and vice, piety and profligacy, have nothing whatever to do with life or death; with the soul's happiness or misery, here or hereafter. This would be honest, plain dealing, and would be acting merely on the principles of Calvinism, which he wishes to have it supposed he entertains; and it would have no worse tendency than the article which gave rise to these cursory remarks. It is a fortunate thing, however, that there is some common sense in the world, and that notwithstanding the prejudices of education, and the no less fatal influence of *priestcraft*, the teachings of sacred Scripture prevent men from *acting*

on the principles of their *avowed creed*; and while that creed would naturally lead them to despise the restraints and corrections of religion, they rise superior to the temptations of their belief, and conscientiously discharge the duties they owe to God and man.

J. H. W.

AN ADDRESS TO TRINITARIANS,

On the supposed indifference of Unitarians for the Scriptures.

It is generally supposed that Unitarians have no regard for Scripture, but trample upon it recklessly, when it is opposed to their peculiar opinions.

Were this charge founded on fact, then indeed we would deserve the reprobation of every friend of man. Then the public odium, which is attached to ourselves and our faith, would be justifiable, and we might in truth be considered the enemies of God and religion.

But it is most unfounded and libellous. In the language of Chillingworth, "the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of" Unitarians. With the amiable and revered Locke, we believe "it has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Why then are we branded with a contempt for the Scriptures? Simply, because we do not receive a translation of them by fallible and prejudiced men, as infallible. Our opponents calculate on public ignorance and credulity; and because we object to some of the readings, and to many of the translations of the common and received version, as spurious and erroneous, they denounce us as the enemies of truth, and as infidels in the guise of Christians. And though the grossness and falsity of this charge would at once be apparent, did men but reflect, yet it meets with a general acceptance, and passes current in the world for truth. In consequence of this, both ourselves and our opinions are regarded with a causeless fear and dread. You perhaps may have imbibed this prevailing prejudice, and regard our sentiments with a jaundiced eye. If so, before we can hope to engage your serious attention to our views of Scripture truth, we must justify ourselves and brethren, and convince your minds, that your opinion of us is erroneous. Unless we are able to effect

this, you will not, nor should you, give that consideration to our doctrines which, if the path we pursue be right, they deserve and demand. We constitute you, then, the judges between us and our accusers. If we be wrong, condemn us; but if we be not, we claim from you a verdict of acquittal, and a serious investigation of our arguments. And we do not ask you merely for a verdict of acquittal. If we cannot force the conviction on your minds, that we, instead of being the enemies of God and religion, are the best and only true friends of Scripture and Scripture truth, we call upon you to condemn both us and our doctrines.

Though this translation of the sacred Scriptures, which was published in England in the reign of James the First, is hallowed by every youthful and endearing recollection; and though we regard it, in general, as a fair transcript of Christian truth, and as containing all that is necessary to direct our faith and practice, we cannot receive it, or impose it on others, as in all respects an infallible rendering of the original, and inspired teaching of Moses, the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles. We shall lay before you our reasons; and whether we are justifiable in this or not, judge ye.

You cannot but be aware, that the Scriptures were not originally written in the language of our country; and that the Bible, as its title page sets forth, is merely a translation from the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesty's command. You must also be aware, that the original Scriptures were in manuscript, and that copies of them were multiplied and handed down, until the comparatively modern invention of printing, by the slow and laborious process of writing alone.

The autographs, or the original writings of the inspired penmen, have long since been lost; and in the copy manuscripts which have escaped the ravages of time, we find what we would naturally expect in copies transcribed at different times, and by different individuals:—We find, that from slips of the pen, a very slight one of which would alter many of the letters of the original, (they are so similar,) and from involuntary and scarcely to be avoided mistakes of the transcribers, that these manuscripts contain a variety of readings. In consequence of this, a translator of the Scriptures is obliged

to compare manuscript with manuscript, and to ascertain, as far as possible, from their conflicting testimony, what was the true reading of the lost original.

Now just bear this in mind, and can any man assert, that the translators of King James's Bible were infallible judges of the true reading of the original manuscripts of the inspired penmen. Suppose they had possessed all the manuscripts which are known in the present day, and been aided by the superior knowledge and the correcter principles of criticism which now prevail, they were, in the *first* place, but fallible men, and consequently, though actuated by the best and purest motives, amid the variety of readings which existed, they were still liable to err, and therefore, their translation, even on this favourable supposition, cannot be regarded even by the most bigotted, as an infallible record of the words of eternal life.

But they had *not* the best means of ascertaining the true reading of the original Scriptures. Eastern manners and customs, which are so frequently alluded to in the word of God, and the knowledge of which is essential to its proper interpretation, were then but little known. The true principles of Biblical criticism were then also little studied and observed. Since that time, a flood of light has been let in on both these subjects, by the labours of the learned, and the travels of the curious and inquiring. And what is the consequence? Why even the Orthodox themselves have detected many errors in the common version; and though they condemn us, as soul-destroyers, for a similar practice, you will frequently find them, both from the pulpit and the press, amending the received translation—yes, that very translation which, in the controversy with Unitarians, they represent as infallible. Though the Unitarian just pursues the same path, because his researches lead him to controvert some of their favourite translations, on which their favourite sentiments rest for support, for lack of argument to convict him of error, they raise against him the convenient and too effectual cry of heresy. They warn the world to beware of him, as a denier of the Scriptures, while he only argues for the truth of Scripture, and against their misconceptions of it. Place the same men in opposition to a Roman Catholic, and they will freely controvert the fidelity of his received version :

and if he exclaim against them as deniers of Scripture because they do so, how will they laugh at his accusation ! But they just change sides with the Catholic when they engage in controversy with the Unitarian and because he employs the same weapons against them, which they employ without the least twinge of conscience against their Roman Catholic brother, they pronounce the Unitarian heretical, and a perverter of the Scriptures. But such has ever been the way of Error and Bigotry.

There is still a more powerful reason than the translators' comparative ignorance of Eastern manners and customs, and the principles of Biblical criticism, why we do not regard the commonly received version of the Scriptures as an infallible translation of the original writings of the inspired penmen.

The authors of this translation had not the manuscripts, either as to number or authority, which we now possess, to enable them to give to the world a perfect version of the records of eternal life. As far as regards the New Testament, with which as Christians we are most concerned, the Greek text, from which it was principally made, is imperfect even in the estimation of every Orthodox writer of learning and candour. It was founded on the edition of Elzevir, the printer, more on account of the beauty of its execution than the conviction of its intrinsic worth. This edition was again founded on the Greek Testaments of Erasmus, Beza, Stephens, and a few others : and these again, on the collation of from fifteen to twenty manuscripts. But in addition to these, nearly four hundred more have since been discovered, and many of them more antient and trustworthy, than the few which were known in the days of King James. These have been all collated by the learned, impartial, and indefatigable Griesbach, a Trinitarian, and an improved text formed from them, on the best and surest principles of criticism. By this means, many errors have been detected in our present version ; but at the same time, in justice to it we must observe, very few which affect the sense of a passage, or the aspect of a fact, or bear essentially on doctrine.

Now, since the received version was not made up from the best sources, and has been demonstrated by the after and superior means of information which we en-

joy to be in some respects erroneous, must you not concede it to us, that Unitarians are right in departing from it where it is proved to be wrong? Is not their departure, instead of being criminal as their opponents wish you to believe, one of the strongest claims they can possibly possess on your attention and respect? What can be more valuable to you, than the truth as it is in Christ Jesus? In that truth, your eternal interests are most materially involved. Is the man, then, who endeavours to free it from all error, and to present it to you in its native and winning loveliness, liable to the grievous charge of perverting the Scriptures? Having his own and your everlasting prospects in view, can you regard him as your enemy, because he tells you the truth? Possessing such claims on your attention, should you not examine his corrections of supposed Scripture, and if you find them founded on proper authority, should you not receive them with joy and gratitude?

But even suppose the translators of the common version had enjoyed all the means of knowledge which we now possess, there is still another reason why we do not place implicit reliance on its fidelity, and regard it as in all respects an infallible rendering of the original.

Its authors were men prejudiced in favour of certain religious tenets. They came to the execution of their appointed task with biassed minds. They had been bred up in the self-styled Orthodox faith—taught to regard every departure from it as heretical and damnable;—and as the laws of the land prevented the diffusion of Unitarian light and truth, they had little means to counteract the errors of education. Now just consider the powerful controul which early and deep-rooted impressions exercise over the feelings and convictions of the mind, and can you wonder that they sometimes gave translations more in accordance with their own pre-conceived opinions than the simple truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Give to them all due praise for sincerity and integrity, and under the circumstances it was impossible that they could so divest themselves of prejudice, as to render on all occasions according to the intended meaning of the text. When a passage occurred, which seemed to run counter to their long-cherished belief, would they not in the very nature of things exert their ingenuity to make it coincide with their favourite views. Why, I

would suspect my own fidelity, under similar circumstances; and, however convinced I might be of the justness of my renderings, conscious how prejudice will warp the judgment, I would not dare to impose them on others as an infallible guide.

Just then consider the prejudices of fallible men, and how they lead to unintentional error, and are Unitarians culpable for not receiving the translations of such men as undoubted gospel, without examination and scrutiny? And when they find them in error, are they criminal to reject their false renderings? Is it not their duty, as well as of every Christian, to examine the subject for themselves, lest by blindly following the dictates of others, they receive the commandments of men, for the doctrines of God? Now this is just the principle on which the Unitarian acts; and we appeal to your own convictions, is he not justified in so doing?

T. M.

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER AND AN AGED ELDER.

In a late number of "The Orthodox Presbyterian," a contributor to its pages, speaking of the Synodical Overtures, expresses himself thus: "We have noticed with unfeigned satisfaction, the good opinion universally expressed of these Overtures, by the friends of religion and of the Presbyterian church; not merely in this country, but in both England and Scotland, they are hailed, as likely means of regenerating the Synod of Ulster." This quotation deserves to be attentively considered, first, because it proceeds from the standard of Orthodoxy, and again, because it is bolstered by a frontispiece—acknowledging the authority and influence of the celebrated Scottish Reformer. We have been viewing it in connexion with both these circumstances, and have no hesitation in admitting, that the doctrines which it advocates, have numerous partizans and admirers. With respect, however, to the *universality* of admiration expressed for these Overtures, we feel much inclined to call the reality of it in question. We certainly know vast numbers in this country, who were so far from entertaining a favourable opinion of them, that they

strenuously opposed their enactment, considering them not only erroneous, but utterly subversive of the peace, discipline, and prosperity of the Presbyterian church. And that man must be credulous indeed, who could for a moment suppose, that the enlightened inhabitants of this province could be induced to countenance a system of religious opinions, got up in opposition to reason, common sense, and Scripture; a system, which has spiritual domination for its object, and which, in its tendency, goes directly to produce and perpetuate ignorance, cant, and hypocrisy. But I go farther, and venture to assert, that the influential part of the population, denominated Orthodox, particularly in Belfast, instead of approving, were found to entertain sentiments of a very opposite character. Witness their noble conduct in the case of Grey-Abbey. Witness their noble stand and interposition on the very field of battle, when they boldly sounded a retreat, and the clerical Calvinistic heroes were obliged to retire from the contest covered with shame, discomfiture, and defeat. What, alas! is now to become of the Synod of Ulster, when even her Orthodox friends have thus presumed to interfere, and arrest the *great work* of *regeneration* so auspiciously begun at Grey-abbey:

“ When pulpit drum Ecclesiastic
Was beat with fist, instead of a stick.”

And when, as the same writer humorously observes—

“ With Apostolic blows and knocks,
They proved their doctrines Orthodox.”

But Scotland has been referred to, as lending the stamp of her approbation to these Overtures. It is well known that she has a Calvinistic creed; but it does not follow that her clergy and laity are therefore possessed of a persecuting spirit; on the contrary, the conduct of both, with few exceptions, has been known to lean to the side of liberality, not perhaps on account of her creed, but because her inhabitants are blessed with the means of a learned and liberal education. Hence we seldom find her statute book stained with intolerant enactments; with persecuting Overtures, or with secret, heart-probing and inquisitorial committees. Indeed, the education and literature of that highly gifted country, form a complete antidote to all such poisonous nostrums, and have for ever banished from her church and councils, that

anomalous jargon, commonly known by the name of Scholastic Divinity. Sacred history informs us, that the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.— But profane history, or that of the Presbyterian Church, also informs us, that the statutes of men are wrong, for instead of rejoicing, they too often fill the heart with grief, and the most gloomy apprehensions.

We need not be surprised then, that of late the march of intellect has not only been retarded, but that it has even retrograded two or three centuries. It is true, in literary, political, and professional pursuits, men have risen to great eminence; but it is equally true, that in Theology and Moral Philosophy, those noblest of all sciences, they have made little or no progress. Nor is it to be wondered at, that the sublime truths of religion and morality, should have thus been so wofully perverted. The darkness of ignorance, the thunders of wild fanaticism, and the drivelling cant of hypocrisy, have all been laid under contribution for the purpose of effecting this mental degradation. Hence it is, that, in the 19th century, and in the midst of civilized Presbyterian Ulster, we have been carried back to the dark or middle ages, when ignorance was called the mother of devotion; and when the produce was, as at present, a plentiful crop of superstition and wild enthusiasm. To effect this, the operations of the understanding have been suspended, as having no necessary connexion with the performance of religious duty. Reason has been dethroned; mystery has been exalted and called upon to usurp its place; and this fanaticism has been followed up by its partizans, proclaiming in Synod, and from Synodical pulpits, that rational preaching was unfit for the ear of a Christian audience. In this manner has morality been denounced. The sermon on the Mount, as carrying morality to the highest pitch of perfection, will share, in all probability, a similar fate; and then we must look for pure and undefiled religion, not in the Scriptures, but in a set of Overtures, of human composition, dark, mysterious, and unintelligible. In opposition to such dogmatical assertions, I must still contend for it, that true or vital religion, whether existing in theory or in practice, must be intimately connected with mind; and why?—because mental improvement is the grand criterion or proof of its vitality; without this

it ceases to be a reasonable service. Whatever form of it may appear, if void of understanding, is like the body, without the spirit, dead; when connected with intellect, it can then only be called a manly, rational worship, or the practice of virtue with understanding, without which it degenerates into empty form or senseless passion.

Having succeeded in their crusade against common sense and Scripture, it might have been expected that the Orthodox would have relaxed in their acts of persecution and spoliation; but this was altogether a vain hope. The outworks of the fortress had only been carried: the citadel, to which a retreat had been effected, must also be reduced. In fact, the great Head and King of the Church must be put down, to prepare the way for the introduction of something of a nondescript character—the mere creature of a distempered mind, by some called a Committee, by others an Overture; whilst the greater number gave it the name of a Confession or Creed. For our part, we deny the right of any man or body of men to dictate the faith or practice of another. We lay greater stress on personal religion, or, to speak plainly, on exemplary life, than on a merely speculative belief in this or that doctrine; and while the admirers of a mysterious faith prefer a correct belief in speculative points, we hesitate not in giving a decided preference to Evangelical piety and sound morality. We reject, therefore, the imposition of subscription by an Ecclesiastical body, as a foul conspiracy against Christian liberty—an attempt to put a stop to religious improvement, and keep the people in ignorance—a usurpation of the very power which we reprobate in other churches:—and, in fine, a substitution of the confession of man, in place of the Bible of God. If the dictates to obedience by any church or individual are to be imperative, where is the use of reason or wisdom, emphatically styled in Scripture the candle of the Lord? And why are we called upon to exercise our judgment, by proving all things and holding fast that which is good? The very fact, that God has given us a revelation of his will, evidently implies that we should exercise our judgment on its contents. We are called upon to stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But I assert, that the practice of the present day contradicts this divine precept: in fact, the

principle and the practice are at variance. The principle leaves you free; but the practice encumbers you with creeds, formulas, and confessions of faith, and requires subscription or belief of them as terms of Ministerial communion. And now, gentle reader, having no occasion myself for any thing in the shape of a creed, allow me to make you a present of one or two of these most *precious documents*. The first, and by far the most valuable, that I shall offer for your acceptance, is the Athanasian creed. The second is nameless, though on that account not less valuable, since it is manufactured from these famous Overtures, that we are told have obtained so much celebrity and applause, over England, Ireland, and Scotland. Peruse them most attentively, and make sense of them if you can; for to me they appear to be rather enigmatical and incomprehensible;

“As if hypocrisy and nonsense,

Had got the advowson of the conscience.”

But let us not, amidst the wreck of creeds, forget to pay the tribute of our respect to faith, considered as a principle of action. Let us not allow its usefulness or authority to decrease, but endeavour to keep it, as much as possible, more continually on the increase. I shall not, at present, enter on the abstract question, how far the practice of religion is connected with, or dependent on the belief of its principles; though I am free to admit that the practice may be facilitated by the belief. We cannot worship God unless we have faith, that is, unless we believe that he exists. We cannot obey his will, unless we believe he has made his will known to us: he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that seek him. To the makers and admirers of creeds, then, we have at last found a short but scriptural and comprehensive one, embracing the two great and leading principles of natural and revealed religion; the former part refers to the being and attributes of God, the latter relates to a state of future retribution revealed to us in the Gospel, where our blessed Lord has brought life and immortality to light. Admitting then, though in a qualified sense, that without faith it is impossible to please God, we must, on the same authority assert, that without holiness it is impossible to see him; and, therefore, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, unsupported both

by reason and Scripture, must fall to the ground, like the baseless fabric of a vision. Indeed, faith is of little use ; can contribute nothing to salvation, unless it produces good works—the works of kindness, beneficence, and public spirit,—without these the observance of religious ordinances will never answer the purpose : and though we readily grant that the worship of the Almighty is a duty of paramount importance ; and that the hearing and reading of discourses, as connected with the perfection of that worship, is also important ; yet we must aver, that if we rest in these as an end, instead of using them as a *means* for the accomplishment of an end, we must expect to share the fate of the barren fig tree, which, though well cultivated and pruned, refused to bear fruit, and was therefore hewn down, and cast into the fire. Our Lord himself, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, viewed such external observances in a very different light from many of his pretended followers ; he preferred the doer, to the hearer of the word ; the heretical, but charitable Samaritan, to the uncharitable, though Orthodox priest and sanctified Levite. To those nominal Christians, who cry Lord, Lord, that is, expect to be justified by faith, he is very particular in declaring, that they shall be rejected, because they have been deficient in good works ; whilst those who have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothing to the naked, are assured of acceptance at the last day, though they had not even the privilege of being acquainted with his name : Faith then has its use ; but the abuse of it is too obvious to be overlooked ; to become a saving principle, it must be accompanied with repentance and conversion, or amendment. The command runs thus :—“ Repent and be converted,” &c. &c. *That* conversion must be different from what we are insultingly told, has been picked up on some lonely road, or by the stump of an old tree. We will not subscribe to its reality, because it pretends to fanatical rant, or rapturous fits of devotion ; we will then only be convinced of its existence, when its pretended professor gives practical proof of amendment, by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.

It would appear, then, if we pay the least regard to truth, or respect the dictates of reason, or attend to the declarations of Scripture, that the only sure ground of

admission into heaven, and of security against future punishment, is an unreserved, though imperfect obedience to the laws and precepts of the Gospel. Whilst we make these laws and precepts, therefore, the principal objects of our care; in other words, whilst we prefer the essentials to the non-essentials; the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and the love of God, to the paying of mint, anise and cumin; accidental indiscretions, and unavoidable infirmities, cannot be supposed to make such total irreparable breaches in the character, but it may still be regarded even by infinite purity, with favourable and merciful allowances, and on sincere penitence, through Jesus Christ, be finally entitled to pardon and acceptance.

I conclude in the words of a certain Philosopher, who being asked, what religion he would recommend, answered as follows :

“The best Religion, is that which unites men, and not that which divides them; that which is of no party, which forms virtuous citizens, and not impotent and rancorous partizans; that which tolerates, and not that which persecutes; that which says, that the whole Law consists in loving God, and one’s neighbour, and not that which makes a tyrant of God, and victims of our neighbours.”

AN AGED ELDER.

ON THE LORD’S SUPPER.

“*This do in remembrance of me.*”

What a tender, what an affectionate command! and well may it excite feelings of astonishment and grief, that it should ever lose its influence on the Christian’s heart, or that any perversion of judgment should mistake its import. The last advice and dying instruction of the wise and good, have in all ages been held peculiarly sacred, and have often made so deep and lasting an impression, as to be had in everlasting remembrance. Even among the heathens, this feeling of respect for the dead was cherished to so great an extent, that to it we owe some of the valuable maxims and remains of antiquity which we possess. But to the disciples of Christ, no precepts of departed virtue can appear so worthy of

veneration, of diligent attention, and religious respect, as the last commands of our blessed Lord to his faithful followers. The relation which he bears to Christians is solemn and important, the concern which he at all times manifested for our eternal welfare was so strong and disinterested, and his example so promotive of faith and good works, that we should dwell on his precepts with holy and affectionate love, and obey his commands with diligence and fervour. To what then can we attribute the dereliction of his table, by many zealous and devout Christians, whose otherwise conscientious behaviour, and steady performance of all the moral, relative, and social duties of life, forbid our attributing it to carelessness or indifference? We must, therefore, suppose, that this neglect of a positive appointment, must proceed from wrong and mistaken views of its intention and design.

Suppose that the command was only binding on the immediate followers of Christ, and that we were under no *obligation* to follow the example of these primitive and affectionate Christians, in this simple memorial of their love; yet if we consider only a few of the benefits resulting from its general observance, we shall be convinced of its utility in a *moral* point of view. Here at the table of our Lord, every angry passion, every contending feeling is laid at rest—all trifling distinctions of sect and party are for the time forgotten; and all ranks of people unite together in one solemn act of harmony and love. Here, Christians, whatever be their opposing interests in the world, meet together in commemorating the death of one common friend and Saviour; and all unkind feelings, all harsh sentiments are banished from their breasts. Surely, then, any rite that tends to soothe the irritating feelings of anger and jealousy, and which binds closer around us the bonds of Christian love and friendship, must always be seasonable, must always be good.

From the life, death, and ascension of our Lord, we derive our most cherished feelings of pardon, peace, and happiness. For us he trod the most rugged paths in his passage through life—for us he submitted without a murmur to the unparalleled agonies of a painful and ignominious death—and for us he rose in triumph from the tomb; thereby giving us the heart-cheering assur-

ance of a life to come:—and if we compare the fulness and certainty of our faith in the resurrection, with the vague, speculative, and uncertain hope of the world before the coming of our Saviour, we will learn the value of that inestimable truth, and be also convinced that the return of Christ from the grave hath done more towards confirming our faith in the immortality of our nature, than all that the law or the prophets could ever have effected.—And shall we omit any rite or ceremony that is calculated to impress these events more strongly on our minds—that would rouse within us more vivid conceptions of their power and efficacy in purifying the heart from worldly thoughts and affections,—which would recal to our memories our Saviour's dying love, and awaken within us such holy gratitude; such pious awe and fervour, as to induce us to walk in his steps, and obey in all things his precepts and commands?

I am aware that some persons object to this rite from the dread of multiplying to too great an extent the outward forms and ceremonies of religion; but let these beware of *spiritualizing* too much. During our stay here, our minds are not so far etherialized, as to do away with the assistance we derive from other senses in performing the external forms of devotion. These, I grant, have no value in themselves, but simply as evidence of feelings within, and are to these indebted for their truth and character. They are necessary stimulants in keeping alive the weak, unsteady flame of piety, and warming it to life and energy; and it is strong evidence of good, when we are willing to use those means which are promotive of our spiritual improvement. Many have abstained from this rite from the harsh and denunciatory language in which St. Paul's words are rendered in our common version, (1 Cor. xi. 29.)—but it is now, I believe, pretty generally known, that the word *damnation* should be rendered *judgment*; and by referring to the following verse, our doubts as to the meaning and application of the word are quite removed. A little attention, also, to the context, will shew how the Corinthians were accused of drinking *unworthily*.

By refusing to commemorate the death of Christ, we deprive ourselves of the good resulting from cherishing by social communion the mutual feelings of gratitude and affection for our departed Lord, from strengthening

our own piety and virtue, and exciting feelings of benevolence, good will, and all kindly affection towards our fellow-creatures. It would be well, however, if the evil rested there. We also disobey a plain, unambiguous, and positive command. What can be more emphatic and explicit than "Do this in remembrance of me?" It appears of *universal* obligation on Christians; and were there no other declaration than this, it would be sufficient, one would think, to silence the cavils of scepticism. But even this is not left to inference or doubt; for we are expressly told by the words of the inspired Apostle, that "as oft as Christians eat that bread and drink that cup, they shew forth the Lord's death till he come." That the early Christians believed the obligation to be perpetual, we have many convincing proofs—and also the testimony of the fathers who flourished in the second and third centuries after Christ and his Apostles—that it was then observed in all the churches where Christianity was professed; and I believe I should be borne out in asserting, that, in the dark ages, when the Scriptures were withheld from the mass of the people, and little studied by the learned, if this ceremony had not been observed, the remembrance of Christ's death would have been almost forgotten.

It is the duty of all to join in this holy ordinance: there is none on whom a stronger obligation is laid, than on us, Unitarian Christians. We are accused of denying Christ—of not believing in his divine mission—and many other charges equally erroneous, and of a similar nature, are brought against us, which it would be vain to reason against. Practice is the best commentary on our principles. Our opponents are ever on the watch, to detect some lurking imperfection, with which to accuse us. We are as "a city set on a hill;" and it is a serious reflection, that our conduct may honour or dishonour our holy cause. I ask not too much when I say, that we ought in no instance to give room for the cause of truth to be evil spoken of. The principles of Unitarianism are going forth into many lands, and numbers are joining in distant countries the uplifted standard of our faith—if we wish these blessings to continue, and our high hopes for the spread of pure religion to be realized, let our practice be as pure and free from reproach, as all candid and liberal minded Christians must wish our principles to be.

Since writing the above, I have been favoured with the perusal of a little tract, published by the American Unitarian Association—"Excuses for the neglect of the Communion considered." I am proud to say that the writer's sentiments correspond with mine; and as many of my ideas on the subject are there expressed in a much clearer and better manner than I could have done, I earnestly recommend its perusal to all who read these lines.

DICE.

An Answer to the Question, "Why do you go to the Unitarian Meeting-house?"

"Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason." PETER.

"Prove all things." ... PAUL.

I. Because the Unitarians reject all human creeds and articles of faith, and strictly adhere to the great Protestant principle, "the Bible—the Bible only;" admitting no standard of Christian truth, nor any rule of Christian practice, but the words of the Lord Jesus and his Apostles.

II. Because the Unitarian doctrine can be expressed in the words of Jesus and his Apostles, without addition or comment: hence it appears to me most agreeable to the Scriptures.

"And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.—And the Scribes said unto him, Well Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. Mark xii. 28—34. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. "To us there is but one God, the FATHER, of whom are all things;—and

one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." 1 Cor. viii. 6. "God is one." Gal. iii. 20. "One God and Father of all, who is above all." Eph. iv. 6. "One God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. ii. 5.

III. Because at the Unitarian Meeting-house I am not taught to think that those who do not believe the doctrine there maintained, "must, without doubt, perish everlastingly," nor required to censure and condemn any man for differing from me in his religious sentiments; but am exhorted to live in charity with all men.

IV. Because there I am at full liberty to judge for myself, and exercise all the rights of conscience; without being exposed to the least censure, or unkind treatment.

"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."—Matt. xxiii. 8. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. v. 1.

V. Because I can understand the doctrine taught there, and have not to assent to what is contrary to reason.

"Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Luke xii. 57. "Your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1.

VI. Because I think it both a duty and a privilege to unite in the worship of the one God the FATHER, according to the directions of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"After this manner, therefore, pray ye, *Our Father, etc.*" Matt. vi. 9. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth; for the *Father* seeketh such to worship *him*." John iv. 23. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the *Father* in my name, *he* will give it you." John xvi. 23.

VII. Because at the Unitarian Meeting-house I hear Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, preached as the Christ, the son of the living God.

It is impossible for God to die, be buried, and raised from the dead; but the Apostle Paul declares, "It is Christ that died." Rom. viii. 34. "That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day." 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. The Apostles did not preach, as the Christ, a divine person who dwelt in the crucified man, which person could neither die nor be buried; but they asserted, that the very same person who was crucified, was both Lord and Christ. Acts ii. 36.

VIII. Because Unitarians teach the doctrine of "the true grace of God," his unmerited, unpurchased favour to mankind, that salvation and eternal life are his free gifts through Jesus Christ; which is clearly the doctrine of Scripture. John iii. 16. Rom. vi. 23. Eph. ii. 8. Tit. ii. 11.

IX. Because God is spoken of according to the Scriptures, at the Unitarian Meeting-house, as a Being who is infinitely wise, just, and good, as the Father of all. Eph. iv. 6. There I hear nothing ascribed to him that is inconsistent with perfect wisdom, justice, and goodness, or with his character, as the gracious Father of all, or with the declaration, GOD IS LOVE. 1 John iv. 8.

X. Because there the crucified Jesus is exalted, as having attained his high dignity and glory, and his appointment to be the Saviour and Judge of the world, as the reward of his obedience and perfect righteousness. Phil. ii. 9. Heb. i. 9.

XI. Because there the Gospel is asserted to be the ministration of the Spirit, and the divine influence to be universal and perpetual. 2 Cor. iii. 8. Acts xvii. 26. Rom. xi. 36. Eph. iv. 6.

XII. Because there the necessity of personal righteousness is insisted on, and the spirit of Christ and conformity to his example, made essential to genuine Christianity. Rom. viii. 9. 1 John ii. 6. and iii. 7.

XIII. Because there a future righteous retribution is preached, and at the same time it is maintained that purity, life, and happiness, will be universal, *and that God will be ALL IN ALL.* 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Rom. v. 21. and viii. 21.

XIV. Because there I am taught to think well of human nature, as the work of God, and to love all mankind as my brethren, as the rational offspring of the Almighty, the objects of his love, made by him for happiness. Acts xvii. 29. John iii. 16. Rev. iv. 11.

XV. Because the Gospel, as preached among the Unitarians, is, according to our Lord's words, (Matt. xi. 25.) a revelation to babes, and perfectly suited to the poor, to whom it was first preached; being on a level with the common sense of mankind.

Such are my reasons for going to the Unitarian Meeting-house. Are they not Scriptural? Reader, go thou likewise, and judge for thyself.

U. C.

THE LAW.

The dawn of morn no lustre shed,
 On Sinai's bare and rugged head ;
 No cheerful sunbeam lent its ray,
 To usher in the welcome day ;
 But fire, and smoke of lurid hue,
 Deformed the heaven's delightful blue—
 Far—far within the thickening cloud,
 The trumpet's voice peal'd long and loud,
 And deeper still the blackness grew,
 The dark-red meteors fiercer flew ;
 Tottered the mountain to its base,
 As shrinking from its maker's face ;
 For thunder's roar and lightning's glare,
 Proclaimed Jehova's presence there.
 Down in the barren plain below,
 Stretched Israel's tents in goodly show ;
 And Israel's sons beheld afar
 Great Nature's wild, tumultuous war ;
 And pale, and ghastly, in the gloom,
 Seem'd to forebode approaching doom.
 Again the trumpet's brazen throat,
 Pour'd forth a louder, longer note.
 The thunder's voice more frequent came,
 The lightnings flash'd a broader flame,
 And while, to dire commotions driven,
 Earth seem'd to brave the bolts of heaven,
 The LAW from God to man was given.

THE GOSPEL.

O'er Bethlem's plain the midnight breeze
 Swept softly through the fragrant trees,
 Wafting sweet odours on its wings,
 From Nature's thousand secret springs.
 Smiling in radiant beauty high,
 The lovely moon walked through the sky,
 Glancing on rock, and tree, and plain,
 While shining worlds seem'd but her train ;
 And nought was heard of earthly sound,
 To break the solemn silence round,
 Save where the sheep-bell's tinkle clear
 Like " fairy music met the ear,"
 Or where, beneath the Palm-tree fair,
 The Shepherd's pipe proclaimed his care.
 Wide o'er the bosom of the night
 Shone, full and clear, a heavenly light—
 No meteor's flash, nor lightning's glare,
 But all was beauteous, grand, and fair,

And forms of bright celestial mien
 Were in that flood of glory seen,
 And music, such as angels love,
 Was heard around, beneath, above,
 ('Twas incense offered to the skies,
 A pure and living sacrifice,)
 Proclaiming, at the Saviour's birth,
 "Glory to God, and peace on earth ;"
 And thus the GOSPEL raised its head
 Triumphant from an infant's bed.

Intelligence.

Unitarian Christian Tract Society.

A Tract Society is in progress in Belfast, to be denominated—
 " *The Ulster Unitarian Christian Tract Society.*" The object of
 this Society is, to maintain the sufficiency of Scripture, as a perfect
 rule of faith and practice ;—to vindicate the right of private
 judgment and free inquiry on religious subjects ; and to promote a
 knowledge of the genuine doctrines of Christianity,—as that
 "there is but ONE GOD THE FATHER."

This much wanted Institution has the prospect of being well
 supported in town and the surrounding country, and may be
 rendered very useful to the community. The humbler ranks are
 not able to provide large works, and many of those, from whose
 circumstances and education better information might be expected,
 entertain the most erroneous ideas regarding Unitarianism. They
 have never felt its loveliness, consistency, and power, and cannot
 be good judges of its value either in health or in sickness.

Essay on the Trinity, by Alex. Stewart, Esq. Barrister at Law.
 —We earnestly request our readers to peruse this admirable little
 Pamphlet. It is the production of a truly candid and christian
 mind ; written in a temper and spirit seldom evinced on subjects of
 controversial theology. The Author comes to his task with a mind
 liberalized by the spirit of the most liberal of Professions, enlarged
 by constant association with the most respectable and enlightened
 society, and freed from those tendencies which, almost inevitably,
 bias the opinions of Divines ; actuated, besides, solely by the love of
 Truth, having no selfish, professional, or party objects to advance,
 his sentiments are entitled to the most serious consideration.

Correspondents.

Various communications have been received. The Letter signed
 G. H. would require many verbal alterations before it could appear
 in the *Bible Christian*. The article on Hare-killing, by A Layman,
 is under consideration ; and Letter, No. II. to the Presbyterians of
 Ireland, came too late for our present number. The lines, by a
 Unitarian, might be much improved.—We intended having given
 our own views of *West India Slavery*, but we were obliged to af-
 ford room for other matter.

Obituary.

In Liverpool, the Rev. JOHN HINCKS, Minister of the Unitarian Congregation in Renshaw-street, in the 27th year of his age. In consequence of his father's settlement in this town, he received the chief part of his education in the Belfast College, and settled in Liverpool, on the removal of his brother to be resident tutor in York College, in the Autumn of 1827. His afflicted relatives have derived consolation from the thought, that it was an event for which he was always preparing; and, therefore, though they sorrow, it is not as without hope. and the congregation which he endeavoured to serve faithfully, have shown the strongest marks of their attachment to him. The following Hymn, written on the occasion, by a Lady, was sung after the funeral sermon, preached in Renshaw-street Chapel, on Sunday, the 13th February.

“He being dead, yet speaketh.”—HEB. xi. 4.

Hark! Christians, to the tones that fill
Each listening mourner's ear,
“He being dead, yet speaketh still,”
His voice is hovering near.

O, listen *now*, tho' once the sound
Might coldly touch thy breast;
Those gentle accents float around
From mansions of the blest.

They speak to youth in warning strain
To shun temptation's way,
Nor venture 'midst the pleasures vain
Of Life's delusive day.

They speak to those in manhood's pride,
As they were wont to speak,
To lay their worldly trust aside,
And better riches seek.

And gently to the infant band
They tell of heavenly things,
And speak of that enduring land
Where endless pleasure springs.

And to the Christian, bent with years,
They breathe in words of love,
And bid him lay aside his fears,
And find his rest above.

O, not in vain his death shall be,
Whose life so brightly shone,
For, “being dead, yet speaketh he,”
In accents all his own.

So, tho' we ne'er shall see him more
Within this hallowed faue;
Yet let us live his virtues o'er,
Nor make his labour vain.

THE
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No. III.

APRIL, 1831.

VOL. II.

*On the knowledge of "the only true God," as reconciling
the world unto himself," by the Son "of his love."*

(Concluded from page 62.)

IN the incarnation of the Son of God, he was constrained to submit to a temporary privation of the glory he had previously possessed, and to permit himself to be assimilated *in all things* to the nature of man, and that, in all the graduated stages of mental imbecility and progressive expansion, and improvement, both in body and mind, to which human nature in its generation and advancement to maturity is subject. Hence it is written of him, that "he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man;"—(Luke ii. 52.)—and, that "he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."—(Heb. iv. 15.) To enable him to pass through those probationary trials, and to exhibit his fidelity under them, it was necessary that he should not merely *humble himself*, as stated in the authorized version of Philip ii. 8.; but also that he should *empty himself*, as the original of verse 7, rendered "he made himself of no reputation," properly signifies. What he then emptied himself of, was "the form of God," in which he appeared prior to his incarnation; and this spiritual *denudation* is the proof that the proper meaning of that clause of v. 6,—"he thought it not robbery to be equal with God," as it is rendered in the common translation, is "he did not aspire, or eagerly desire to be, or to appear as equal with God," *i. e.* in glory, dignity, and in delegated authority; to which privileges his divine birthright certainly entitled him. Of all these he divested himself; voluntarily resigning them for a season, and entering the lists of conflict with the powers of darkness, enveloped in the organized frame of an infant: the powers of his mind being, *pro tempore*, reduced to a correspondence with the feeble intellectual and corporeal organization

of that tender age. This must have been the case, because the brain of a human embryo, or of a new born infant, could not sustain the operations of such an intellect as the second person in the Trinity possessed, unless it were miraculously compressed into a correspondence with the natural powers of that brain. A farther proof of this divestment of his super-human glory and intellectual power, at his incarnation, is the fact, that from his earliest infancy he was under the guidance and tuition of the Holy Spirit, and received a plenary baptism of his divine influence on his entry upon the important duties of his divine mission.—(See Matt. iii. 16. iv. 1.—Luke i. 35. iv. 1.) Whereas, had he then retained the full possession of all his pristine intellectual powers, and of that divine glory which he enjoyed prior to his incarnation, as the Son of God, and heir of all things, he could not have required the aids of the Holy Spirit, nor would he have obtained the same glory in his victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil, as he acquired when surrounded with all the imbecilities and infirmities incident to an incumated spirit, when he was “found in fashion as a man;” and made in the degraded “likeness of sinful flesh.” It was under those adverse circumstances that “the Captain of our Salvation” fought and conquered sin, death, and “him that had the power of death, that is the Devil;” whereby he is now become “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him.”

As both the Father and the Holy Spirit co-operated in the miraculous conception of the Son of God,* so both continued with him during his incarnation, working both in and by him, for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” (2 Cor. v. 19.) until the period of his last agony, when his requisition of angelic succour, (Luke xxii. 43.) and his final exclamation of “Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani,” proclaimed, that in bearing, by imputation, “the iniquities of us all, and vicariously suffering as a sinner, though immaculate and righteous, the consolatory presence of God was judicially withdrawn from him; and, under this cloud, the Sun of Righteousness closed his eyes in death, that we might open ours in everlasting life and immortal glory.

* Agreeably to the annunciation of Gabriel, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,” to prepare thee for that awful communication; and the power of the Highest (i. e. of the Father,) shall overshadow thee, &c.: Luke i. 35.

In contemplating this amazing scene of humiliation, suffering, and love, can we forbear singing with Dr Watts—

“ O for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break ;
And, all harmonious, human tongues
The Saviour’s praises speak !

“ For soon he’ll break Death’s envlous chain,
And in full glory shine ;
O Lamb of God ! was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine !”

Yes, he soon demolished the gates of hell, and conquered the great enemy of God and man. He has extracted the sting of death, and led the powers of darkness captive at his chariot wheels. He arose triumphant from the grave ; and being again exalted at God’s right hand, as a Prince and a Saviour, “ he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.” These he “ washes from their sins in his own blood ;” and redeemst hem from all iniquity, by the influence of his grace, and the energy of his Spirit ; and he is gone to prepare them a mansion in glory, that where he is, there they may be also ;

“ Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”

Then let every true believer in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, join in the triumphant song of the redeemed ; and sing with those in glory : “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever !” For “ worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing for ever !” Even so, amen !

I am, Sir, &c.

PHILALETHES.

Belfast, 25th July, 1830.

P.S.—I have been informed that Dr. Cooke declines replying to my letter addressed to him in your Number for June, under the pretext, that he either is not conscious of having used the word “ sole,” in reference to the Deity of Jesus Christ ; or, if he did, that he did not intend thereby to exclude the Father and Holy Spirit from participating in the Godhead, in conjunction with the Son

of God. Whatever the Doctor's *intentions* may have been, I am as certain as I am of my own existence, that he used the expression ; for it was that, and *that alone* which excited my surprise, and roused my indignation, and which therefore induced me instantly to note it down, while the word still vibrated on my ear.* The word *supreme* I was familiar with ; and had *it* been used alone, I should have passed it over in silence, because it is possible it may be improperly used in reference to the *joint supremacy* of the whole Trinity : but the word *sole* both astonished and alarmed me : in fact, I was *electrified* by it, and in a moment I determined to call upon the Doctor publicly to defend it. But this I find he dares not do ; and he thereby stands convicted, at least in my mind, of using a most unjustifiable expression, upon a subject of the highest importance, *without meaning what he said !* The word *supreme*, however, I have been told, he does not venture to deny ; and as the Doctor is himself a formidable reasoner, he cannot object to have this record, in its present connexion, placed for a few moments in a logical alembic, and its contents analyzed, and exhibited for public edification.

The phrase “ Supreme Deity ” necessarily implies the eternal, and independent self-existence, and self-possession of all the infinite perfections of the Godhead, by the being to whom it refers. The literal application of this phrase to *the Son of God*, is a *gross absurdity* : because no *Son* can be either independent, self-existent, or co-eternal with his Father. The *sole supremacy* of the Son of God, while his Father exists, is therefore *palpable nonsense* ; and hence I must suppose the Doctor *meant* his supremacy, *in conjunction with the Father and Holy Spirit*. It is a great pity that so accomplished a theological orator as Dr. C. avowedly is, cannot *learn* to explain his own meaning upon such important points, and not leave it to be thus traced out by his opponents, by analogy and its unavoidable results : but if my present conjuncture be correct, the Doctor intended to assert “ the supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ,” only as *one person* in the Trinity ; that is, as a third constituent part of Almighty God ; who, the Doctor supposes to consist equally of two

* Until I heard that word, I had not the most distant idea of taking a single note of the Sermon, nor had I any paper with me for that purpose.

other persons also. Now, although the Doctor will doubtless deny that those three persons are three distinct and supreme beings, yet I presume he will admit that their united energies and perfections constitute *one* infinitely perfect being ; to whose perfections, consequently, all the three persons necessarily contribute their proportions. But here again the Doctor leaves us at fault ; for he fails to inform us, both what those proportions are, and how their combination is effected ; and hence we are again drawn into the ocean of uncertain conjecture ! This view of the Godhead, however, naturally suggests the idea of what, in mercantile language, is called “ a joint stock company ;” in which each party contributes, and has credit for, his own share in the concern. Let us suppose then, that the shares in the present case correspond with the number of persons in the copartnership, and that they are all equal. No one person can therefore either contribute or monopolize the whole ;—but *one third part only*. Hence each of the three persons contributes and possesses one third part of eternal, independent self existence ; one third part of omnipotence, of omniscience, and omnipresence : one third part of infinite wisdom, knowledge, truth, justice, holiness, and benevolence ! As the persons in the Trinity, however, are not, by this scheme, supposed to be three rational beings, but only so many *component* parts of one such being, they cannot either voluntarily or consciously determine the *quotas* of their respective contributions to the infinite perfection of the only *one being* who subsists in the connexion. This, therefore, must be left to chance ; it not being possible for a non-conscious person, who is only the third part of an intelligent being, to ascertain precisely, what is the *third part of infinity* ! Moreover, as there is but *one being*, there can be but *one will*, and *one understanding* in the composition ; and, consequently, each person contributes his portion of those faculties ; each therefore having only *a third part of a will*, has no means of deciding upon any action ; and having only *the third part of an understanding*, he is incapable of judging what is right and what is wrong. And this is, according to Dr. Cooke’s orthodoxy, the true character of “ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ;” whom that glorious personage once mistook for, and worshipped, as “ the only true God !”

Now I beg leave to inform Dr. Cooke, that as by his avowed principles he must deny that any one person in the Trinity is the only true God, so his own postulate of "the supreme Godhead of Jesus Christ," is a gross and palpable contradiction to his own fundamental principle of the constitution of the Godhead by the hypostatical union of the three persons. And further, if the latter postulate be true, Jesus Christ, so far from being himself "the supreme God," was an idolatrous man, and a false prophet; teaching men, both by his precepts and example, to worship a person, as "the only true God," who was in fact, according to that hypothesis, only *an imperfect fragment of that God!* Hence, then, is the true and proper termination of the "Orthodox" doctrine, "that it requires the combined energies and perfections of three imperfect half entities, called *persons*, but *who are not even intelligent beings*, to constitute one God." It terminates in idolatry, blasphemy, and the most preposterous absurdity; it overthrows the whole fabric of Christianity, by annihilating, 1st, the deity of the Father, and 2^{dly}, the mediatorial character of the Son, and thus it leaves us without either a God or a Mediator! And yet the advocates of this very system have the unparalleled effrontery and inconsistency to pretend to worship the Father, as the only true God, through the mediation of the Son: thus sanctioning by their constant practice, the very principles which they verbally deny! When will these gentlemen introduce a little common sense into their creed, and a little common honesty into their worship, as the guides of their faith and practice? *O tempora! O mores!*

I shall now beg leave to ask Dr. Cooke two or three plain questions; and if he either cannot or will not answer them, he must renounce his pretensions to the character of an able and soundly orthodox minister of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 1. Is the true God one pure simple Spirit,—or is he a composition of three such Spirits?

Q. 2. If HE is such a composition, does it not follow that *no one* of those spirits can be that God?

Q. 3. If HE be one pure, simple Spirit, what is the true nominal designation of that Spirit?

Q. 4. Does "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," as a being distinct from and independent of the

Son and Holy Spirit, possess alone, all the essential attributes of supreme Godhead, or does he not?

Q. 5. Is the second person in the Trinity the offspring of the first? And is he, or is he not, a distinct, intelligent, self-conscious and self-determining being? If not, who and what is he?

Q. 6. Who is the Holy Spirit? Is he God himself, or a component part of God;—or an emanation from God?

Q. 7. What are the peculiar characteristics of a *person* in the Trinity? How does *it* differ from a distinct intelligent being?—and what are the *proofs* that each person therein, is not such a being?

Q. 8. Who is “the man Christ Jesus”? Is he simply, the incarnated Logos, the Son of God? Or is he a composition of God himself, mixed up with a human spirit, into one person? If so, is not the composition half a God and half a man? In that case, from whence came his human soul? Was it derived from his virgin Mother? If so, did it not spring from *a corrupt stock*? Or did God *create it*, for the occasion? If so, what relation does it bear to the spiritual offspring of Adam? And if it sprang not from Adam and Eve, what right could it possess to officiate as the Sub-redeemer, or coadjutant Saviour of their offspring; which offices are assigned to it by the wisdom of Orthodoxy? Could the justice of God either demand, or be satisfied with any victim for human redemption, who was not a branch of the human family?

The man who cannot, or will not answer the preceding questions, thereby proves himself to be unworthy of the character or office of a Minister of the Gospel. And I propose them to Dr. Cooke for solution, for this plain reason, because any answer he can give to them must either expose the errors of his own system, or lead him to the acknowledgement of that truth which must necessarily overthrow the system which he advocates. And this result is absolutely necessary for the purity and prosperity of the Christian Religion, and its successful propagation among Jews, Turks, Heathens, and infidels in general, who will never embrace its sublime doctrines, or obey its salutary precepts, while they continue encumbered, perplexed, and degraded with the absurdities and impieties which result from the inexplicable and unscriptural dogmas of modern Orthodoxy. From all these, the sanctuary

of God must be speedily and effectually purged. *For the crisis of Christianity is rapidly approaching.*

PHILALETHES.

FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

By the last *Orthodox Presbyterian*, I perceive that the *Member of the Established Church* has taken offence at my animadversions on his former paper. (See Nov. 1830.) Now, I cannot understand how an anonymous writer, whose name, person, and character, are wholly unknown to his opponent, can be personally offended; and, as for opinions, I make neither truce nor compromise with error. I offer him this apology; and leave him in quiet possession of his stale arguments and inexplicable texts.

Trinitarians have little claim on our courtesy, either for their opinions or themselves, while they are every day denouncing damnation against all who cannot believe in their unintelligible doctrines.

May I not be allowed to smile at least, when told, that the Father and Son, the Giver and the Receiver, the Sender and his Messenger, the Teacher and the Taught, are, respectively, one Being, equal and the same; though unity and equality are terms evidently incompatible?

Is it not a trial of patience to hear it asserted every day from the Press and the Pulpit, that the Son is as old as his Father; that the Holy Ghost, proceeding from both, is as old as either, and equal to both; and that these Three compose one undivided Trinity, *sancta et individua Trinitas*, including the human nature of the Son? May we not feel indignant at hearing it proclaimed aloud, that this Fabulous Being, this Quadruple Deity, is the One, Self-existent cause of all things; and yet was born and died, and passed through all the intermediate stages of human life as recorded of Jesus. I cannot descend to particulars, as others do. My pen refuses its office. *Horresco referens*. I shudder at the thought. I dare not write in my study, what many of our Preachers are not afraid to utter in their public prayers to the Almighty, nor ashamed to make the subject of declamation in the face of the church.

Were I a friend to Trinitarians, I would advise them to confine themselves to their old plan, which has an-

swered, and still answers so well, of dinning their mysteries in the ears of their pupils in the nursery, the school, and the church, without troubling themselves with publications or sermons, or encouraging their disciples to reason or ask questions, but only to repeat and believe. But as I am not, I hope they will persevere in exposing their opinions to refutation and themselves to scorn.

ERASMUS.

AUTHENTICITY OF SCRIPTURE.

WHEN arguing with Deists, or wishing to satisfy ourselves of the authenticity of Scripture, we consider the Bible as a collection of books, written by various authors at different periods, and we lay great stress on the *cumulative* evidence, as Paley terms it, which we have from the concurrence of many independent witnesses. A necessary consequence of this mode of considering them will be the attaching of more importance to some books than to others, as being the productions of men more entitled to our confidence, or as with more certainty referred to known authors. Thus it is not considered equally certain that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews and those to the Romans and Corinthians; or, that John, the beloved disciple, was the author of the Revelations as well as of the Gospel which bears his name. Several good men and sincere christians, however, proceed in a different way. They consider all the Bible, as at present published, to be equally inspired, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelations, being all written as it were by the finger of God, and, therefore, equally entitled to respect and veneration. Now, unless they have been themselves inspired, unless they have each had, or some one of them whose authority is admitted, a special revelation to this effect, how do they know what they assert? If they have had such revelation, why do they not expressly say so? They cannot avail themselves of the labours of Jones, and Lardner, and Paley, and Marsh, and others, for these all go on the supposition of the books being distinct, and even sometimes argue for their authenticity from their discrepancies. By doing so, they establish them on a surer ground than any other books which have come down from ancient times, and are

enabled to prove the truth of Revelation by unanswerable arguments. But these arguments cannot be used by those who maintain the opinion referred to, who consider the book of Ruth or Job as of equal authority with the Pentateuch or the Gospels, and who, disregarding evidence, make no difference between the Epistle of Jude and that of Paul to the Romans. The books cannot be both distinct and the same ; and, therefore, those who maintain that notion of inspiration, which supposes every word in the Bible to have been written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, cannot consistently argue from the different characters and circumstances of the writers, or the various evidence, external and internal ; but must either rely on some special information communicated to themselves, which others do not enjoy, or their belief in the authenticity of Scripture must rest on a very sandy foundation.

X.

A SUNDAY IN LIVERPOOL.

THE REV. JOHN HINCKS.

It was on Saturday, I left Newcastle-upon-Tyne for Liverpool, and I had to travel all night to reach it by Sunday morning. A Sunday spent from home, among strangers, is one of the most irksome of days. With a proper view of the Sabbath, no one can, to obviate the tedium, have recourse to the various employments and kill-times which are in too common use. Your every day's avocations are stopped ; business does not occupy you, nor have you the means of employment which other days afford. But a Sunday spent among old friends, with the pleasing recollections of past times, and the renewal of old associations, is a great delight. It relieves the hurried cares of travel, soothes the nervous irritability of long continued coaching, and softens the mind to Religion. With these views I was extremely anxious to reach Liverpool, so as to see and hear my old school-fellow and friend, the Rev. JOHN HINCKS, and to have some agreeable conversation over bye-gone times and old recollections.

It was in February, 1830 ; the roads were bad, and greatly impeded our progress, so that it was late on Sunday morning when we reached Liverpool. Determined

to see my old companion, although much fatigued, I prepared myself for Chapel. I was a stranger in the town; and with some difficulty, with the assistance of the map, and sundry advices from passers-by, I at length reached Renshaw-street. Not thinking of any chapel but one, I entered the first on my right. There was no sexton at the door, nor any persons whom I could ask whether I was right or wrong. I walked up stairs; there was singing within; and, opening the door, I entered a small, plain chapel. The congregation was just rising to prayer. I looked at the Preacher, but could not then discover any resemblance to my friend. It was 14 years since I had seen him, and many changes had taken place in both since that time. We were *then* boys at school; *now* we were men in different avocations. He had exalted his mind, and undertaken the holy and peaceful office of a Minister of Jesus Christ; I had entered life as a man of business, and was immersed in the bustling cares of the world. The Preacher's voice broke my reverie. He had commenced that most awful, most solemn act of devotion—an address to the Great Father of all. His harsh, unmusical voice grated on my ear,—“surely, said I, it cannot be the voice of my friend; *his* was always tuneful and melodious.” However, I again considered the lapse of time. Still, as the speaker went on, expressions escaped him that I knew could not proceed from the lips of John Hincks, unless a very great change had been wrought. I hoped that I was in error. At last the Preacher concluded his prayer by invoking the Trinity! My entrance here, I was now convinced, was a mistake. I more attentively observed the Preacher; his figure, face, and hair, all confused the remembrances of my friend. He had given out a hymn and they were preparing to sing, when a gentleman from the next seat, with much politeness, handed me a hymn book, and I took occasion to ask him “was this Mr. Hincks’ chapel, and was that he in the pulpit?” “No,” said he, “Mr. Hincks’ chapel is farther down the street, and this is a Mr. ———’s.” Waiving ceremony, I departed. I soon found the other chapel, and entering, made myself sure from the sexton, that it was the Unitarian Chapel, and that Mr. Hincks was then engaged in the service. What a contrast, as to numbers, was exhibited between this and the last place! *There*, there were not above 50; *here*, at least, 400.

I sought with eagerness to discover, in the person before me, some faint likeness to him I had known a school-boy ; but nothing in his exterior indicated him whom I sought. I cannot say what my expectations were, but I should not have known my friend before me. But he rises to speak. Oh, the first few tones of that voice ! What a thrill they sent through my whole frame ! From much travelling and long exposure to the air, my nervous system was highly excited. It was strung with increased tension to-day, and would reverberate either to discord or harmony. Discord had rudely struck the chords ; but now, in the holy peace of the Unitarian Chapel, the excitability was softened down to a deep and thrilling feeling of awe and devotion. Tears filled my eyes.

He read that beautiful and striking passage of Paul's writings, the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians—

"Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling sýmbal ; &c."

When he came to that splendid passage which ends in a glorious climax—"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity," he exalted his voice to a still more holy and solemn power, and closed the book. I never heard any thing read with so much ease, less exertion for effect,—yet nothing that told so home to the heart, so full on the feelings. I perceived he had a scarf on ; and from the peculiar hymns, and, afterwards, from the sermon, that it was a funeral oration for a deceased lady of his congregation. His text was taken from the same chapter, 12 verse:—"For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then, face to face : now I know in part ; but then I shall know even as also I am known."

I have heard many brilliant speakers ; I have listened to some excellent readers ; but I never *felt* any emotion such as John Hincks' reading awakened. Every word told a new and truer signification ; every syllable had its fine and peculiar grace,—yet the whole secret seemed to be in the complete abstraction from effect. His lips were as the pure stone of a spotless fountain, pouring out the waters of life in rich abundance. No one could, for a moment, doubt that he felt the full truth of all he

uttered. He seemed to be under the influence of an inward power, too holy for human excitement, and which chastened and subdued his spirit like a mighty spell!—The calm serenity of his manner,—the depth and sweetness of his voice,—made still more low and musical by his subject,—gave me the idea of a spirit-tone breathed into utterance by the pure inspiration of truth. It seemed to him, that the mere utterance of the words must convince. They were the simple articulation of truth; and, in passages of beauty, the lingering of his tones, and almost imperceptible inflections of his voice on a forcible word, gave a charm which it is impossible to describe.

His voice I have said was tuneful and melodious; but this conveys not the thrilling emotion which crept through all the alleys of the heart, and spoke not only to the judgment, but held the senses and mortal frame spell-bound. If ever purity dwelt in mortal mould, it was in his. The *man* seemed absorbed in the *minister* of holy things. His, was indeed the “beauty of holiness.”

A beautiful hymn of Langhorne’s followed, and the whole congregation rose to the sacred melody. There is something grand and impressive in the full burst of sacred music, pealing up from a multitude of voices. I wish this mode of “praise and thanksgiving” were more attended to and cultivated in our Meeting-houses.

The sermon was one of great beauty and truth. The subject seemed peculiarly adapted to my friend’s train of thought. His catechetical examinations of the children occupied him after the service; but in the evening and two following days, I had frequent opportunities in conversation, of observing his complete forgetfulness of self, even to a fault, and of his entire devotion to his sacred calling. I left Liverpool “a sadder,” though, I trust, “a better man.”

His numerous friends in that town can best attest his self-devotion and usefulness: I can only give a faint sketch of what, though confusedly, is yet indelibly imprinted on my mind; the wonderful power he possessed, of conveying the inspired truths of Scripture, almost with the “tongues of angels.” Not many months afterwards he was married; and, on the 5th of February last, he was removed from this world of trials.

The grave has taken his mortal frame, but his immortal spirit has ascended to Him that gave it. Death is not the end or interruption of existence, save in appearance. The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit's life is progressive and immortal. Why then should death be feared? In the Scripture it is called a 'sleeping in Jesus.' Christ said, 'Lazarus sleepeth.' Do we not, therefore, form erroneous notions of the pains which are supposed to attend the dying hour?—Do we not depict *him* as the King of Terrors, who is often the ministering angel of good?

But 'after *death* comes the *judgment*': there's the important consideration. Is it not the judgment that is feared, rather than the mere passage, the entrance?

It is not death then, we should fear, but eternal retribution. But need the good man fear the judgment?

Then, when all hearts are opened, and the most secret sins shall present themselves before the unveiled soul, how dreadful must the 'tribulation be, to that man, who, in this life, had striven with his Maker,' but how ennobling, how exalting, to him who, by 'a patient continuance in well-doing,' sought for 'glory, honor, and immortality,' to find that the eternal life he had desired, he was now in possession of, and that though here, he saw 'as through a glass darkly,' yet, there he sees face to face!

We should not be as 'those who sorrow, because they have no hope.' The Christian Scriptures teach us different sentiments. The dying hour is not that for which the Unitarian delays. It is not on that hour depends our future state. Every action in this life shall be accounted for—every future moment—not that of death only—or of the judgment that follows—but every future moment of our being, is to answer for every present moment.

Let us take heed to ourselves, then, and not waste in idleness and folly, our present fleeting existence; *we* should not so have learned Jesus.

Let us who have the unspeakable advantage of a new and glorious Revelation, show ourselves worthy of it, considering, that 'where much is given much will be required.'

Let us not mourn over our *Dear Friend*, then, but put our steadfast faith in those sublime words of Jesus—

“He that liveth, and believeth on me, shall NEVER DIE.” AMICUS.

Cork, 1st March, 1831.

ON THE DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

To the Editor of the Bible Christian.

SIR—In a late number of “The Orthodox Presbyterian,” there is an article on the depravity of Human Nature—which is another name for Original Sin—and some passages of Scripture are brought forward in favour of the Calvinistic view of this doctrine. I purpose to offer a few short remarks on these texts, showing how inadequate they are to support that amazing doctrine, with the standing or falling of which, its advocates maintain, that the whole of the Christian scheme must fall or stand—

(1.)—Gen. vi. 5.—“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”—This passage relates to the state of the antediluvian world immediately before the deluge, and alleges the gross wickedness which then prevailed, as the cause of that signal punishment. It obviously supposes this wickedness to have been progressive, and to have arrived at that height in the course of 1600 years. This very progressiveness shows that this total depravity was not an essential point of human nature after the fall; but is to be accounted for by the causes that operated then, and have been in operation ever since; that were capable of being counteracted at that time as they can be now. The doctrine of Original Sin, as stated by many Calvinistic writers, requires that there should at all times be an equal amount of wickedness in the heart of man, because that wickedness according to them is at all times infinite, and infinity admits of no degrees. This verse, proceeding as it does upon the wickedness of man having been progressive, is decidedly opposed to their doctrine. If the wickedness of man had been as great at all times before, why is the wickedness at that particular time alleged as the reason for destroying mankind by the deluge? If God knew that this wickedness was unavoidable, why is he represented as waiting 120 years to give time for a reformation which was impossible?

But further, this is a case in which one negative instance is conclusive. The assertion is that this wickedness is inherent and universal. Any one instance, therefore, of a righteous man, completely overturns it. Now, we have Noah himself a just man, and perfect in his generations, and who walked with God; and we have Enoch who walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. "God," says Jeremy Taylor, "might as well have punished all the world for sleeping once a day, or being hungry, as for sinning, if so to do be natural and unavoidable."—This verse, then, simply proves the wickedness of the antediluvian world immediately before the deluge, and is totally irrelevant as a proof of Original Sin.

(2.)—Psalm li. 5.—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This we may fairly consider as the grand proof which Calvinists have to produce in support of their opinion; I will, therefore, analyze it with some care. It is to be observed, that the Psalm is one of the deepest penitence and contrition, being written by David, under exquisite feelings of remorse, for his iniquitous course and conduct towards Uriah and Bath-Sheba. This was the great blot in David's life—he had been lately made sensible of it by Nathan the Prophet—and vents his feelings in the penitential language of this Psalm. All the expressions in it, therefore, are strictly personal; and the whole character of the composition would have been changed—would have become exculpatory, instead of penitential, if David had intended to include the whole race of man, when he acknowledges his transgressions, and that his sin is ever before him. And it deserves to be particularly attended to, that the Calvinistic interpretation of this 5th verse, is directly at variance with David's object. His object is, to represent his sin as appearing to his own mind in the worst possible light, but the effect of this interpretation is to exculpate him altogether; for how was he to blame for iniquity and sin, that were coeval with his very conception in his mother's womb?

This interpretation, therefore, is totally out of character with the whole strain of the Psalm. We have then to consider what is the import of the expressions that he employed: and we shall, I think, find them to be dictated by a wish to convey his sense of his aggravated guilt. His feelings were so strong, that he could find no ade-

quate means of making them known. He was labouring to unburthen his own mind, and he had recourse to a form of expression that was resorted to on similar occasions by other writers. This I will now attempt to prove. In Psalm lviii. 3. it is said, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Can any person understand this literally—that a new-born infant goes astray; and what is more extraordinary still, "*speaks lies.*" Is it not clear, that this passage is a strong poetical expression of the very early initiation of the wicked into the ways of sin. A similar Hebraism occurs in Isaiah xlviii. 8. "For I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb;" and in John ix. 34. where the Pharisees passionately address the man who had been restored to sight by Jesus: "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" The Pharisees could not have been alluding to original sin, for in this way they must have been as much born in sin as this man.

But suppose that we allow to this passage all the extent of meaning that is claimed for it, what shall we say of such expressions as these—Job xxxi. 13. "For from my youth he [the fatherless] was brought up with me, as with a father; and I have guided her [the widow] from my mother's womb." Is not this as wonderful a feat for a new-born infant on the side of virtue, as the former was on that of sin? Psalm xxii. 9, 10. "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts—I was cast upon thee from the womb—thou art my God from my mother's belly;" and Psalm lxvi. 6. "By thee have I been holden up from the womb." Are not these expressions at least as strong for original righteousness as the other for original depravity?

(3.) Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" In despite of the threat fulminated against any person "who will modify this description" as being "a desperate instance of the deceitfulness here described," I must even venture to hint that the prophet is not here speaking of any original corruption, nor of the whole race, but only of the Jews, whose infidelity and departure from the fear of the Lord form the topic on which the prophet is enlarging.

(4.) Matt. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed evil

thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." I am unwilling to use any harsh expressions in these criticisms, but I cannot avoid saying that it is a manifest and gross perversion of Scripture, to apply this passage in support of the doctrine of Original Sin. Our Saviour is, on the occasion on which he uses these words, contending that there was no moral defilement from any act so far as it was merely external; that moral culpability or pollution could proceed only from an inward principle.

It had been objected against his Disciples by the Pharisees, that they transgressed the traditions of the Elders by eating bread with unwashed hands. Jesus confounded the Pharisees by showing that for their own purposes, and for their own gain, they allowed one of the most sacred commandments of their decalogue to be superseded by a tradition which permitted a compensation in money to be substituted for the observance of it. After thus reproving the Pharisees, he gave this important instruction to the multitude: that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man." This is one of the most important principles in the system of morals; but so dull was even Peter at this time, that he had to request an explanation. This was readily given, and in the course of it Jesus stated, that it was because the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, that they defile the man. He then adds this beautiful and forcible enlargement of the principle: "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies." So that in the whole passage, there is not the most distant allusion to Original Sin, but simply an illustration of what was then dark, but is now clearly seen by every child—that it is the principle, or motive, from which an action originates, that constitutes its moral culpability if wrong, or entitles it to praise if right.

(5.) Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The simple meaning of this text seems to be, that the man whose mind is intent upon carnal things, upon eating and drinking, gratifying his carnal tastes and appetites, and so forth, is in a state of enmity against God—continually offending him—counteracting as far as

he can his gracious designs: and such a man cannot possibly be subject to the law of God—for if he becomes subject to that law, and really obedient to it, he must cease to be that carnal man, or man of carnal mind, that he had hitherto been. So that there must, in the nature of things, be a continual enmity between the carnal mind and the law of God. But it is not said, that every man's mind is altogether carnal. It is not said that every man, from the very constitution of his nature, is necessarily and entirely devoted to carnal thoughts and desires; so that it is impossible for him to entertain a thought, or do an act that is not deserving of God's infinite wrath, and of course, of endless punishment and misery. The words *phronéma sarkos*, which are incorrectly translated *carnal mind*, are explained by Locke's friend and correspondent, Limborch, to signify, the desires, the pursuits, the longings of carnal men, who consider the pleasures of the flesh to be the *summum bonum* or chief happiness of man—and such, he observes, cannot possibly be subject to the divine law, which prescribes the denial of carnal lusts in those who hope for spiritual blessings.

The writer that brings forward these proofs in "The Orthodox Presbyterian," resorts to a common *ruse de guerre*, and intimates that there are many other portions of the Sacred Word which bear upon this subject. I should like to see them. It is not fair to keep them back, and trust the fate of what he calls a "fundamental truth" to such miserable arguments as he has advanced. I will in the meantime conclude with a remarkable sentence from Jeremy Taylor, which puts this subject in a strong point of view: "To be born, was a thing wholly involuntary and unchosen, and therefore it could in no sense be chosen that he was born so; that is, born guilty of Adam's sin, which we knew not of, which was done so many thousand years before we were born; which we had never heard of if God had not been pleased in a supernatural way to reveal to us; which the greatest part of mankind to this day have never heard of; at which we were displeased as soon as we knew of it; which hath caused much trouble to us, but never tempted us with any pleasure. No man can perish for that of which he was not guilty; but we could not be involved in the guilt unless some way or other our consent had been involved. For it is no matter who sins, or who is innocent,

if he that is innocent may perish for what another does without his knowledge or leave either asked, or given, or presumed. But if our consent was in it, then either it was included naturally, or by an express will of God that made it so. It can no way be imagined how our will can be naturally included, for we had no natural being. We had no life, and therefore no action, and therefore no consent. For it is impossible there should be an act of will in any sense, when there is an act of understanding in no sense. But if by a divine act or decree it became so, and not our act, then we only are said to consent, because God would have it so; which, if we speak intelligibly, is to charge God with making us guilty when we were not; to say, we consented, when we did not." I remain, &c.

V. D. M.

Belfast, March 16.

LETTERS TO THE PRESBYTERIANS OF IRELAND.

(Continued from Page 29.)

NO. II.

BRETHREN,

I formerly enjoyed the high gratification of addressing those amongst you, who have manfully cast off the trammels of human authority in matters of faith, and determined, at all hazards, "to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." The task which I undertake at present, is much less agreeable, but not less necessary. I turn to those amongst you, who, in their hearts, entirely disapprove of the intolerant enactments of the General Synod of Ulster, and utterly disbelieve the gloomy and revolting system of Calvinism; whilst for worldly interest or convenience—from lukewarmness, timidity, or erroneous views of duty, they continue to wear the galling "yoke of bondage." This class of Presbyterians is well known to be neither inconsiderable in numbers, nor deficient in worldly importance. Generally speaking, too, they are men of great intelligence and moral respectability. Their continuing, therefore, to swell

the hosts of error, and to give the countenance of their characters and their names to a bad cause, is the more to be lamented. There is no large portion of them, either lay or clerical, whose *motives* I am disposed to impugn: but, I do consider them to be in great and injurious *error*; and, in the spirit of christian candour, I shall endeavour to make them look more seriously into the dangers that lie in the path which they pursue. They act from various and mingled sentiments, some of which are nearly allied to the best graces of the Christian character, and none of them wanting, at least, a plausible foundation. I shall, therefore, address them under different divisions, as I conceive they may be fairly arranged.

First of all, I turn to those of you, my Brethren, who are the victims of *a spurious and boastful liberality*.—You are numerous and respectable, and you act upon what you believe to be the genuine principles of Gospel charity. Your error is, on that very account, the more dangerous; because you are not liable to be startled like the conscious sinner, at the deformity of your own motives and actions. Not believing that a merciful and righteous God will condemn any of his rational offspring to eternal misery, for *an unavoidable error of opinion*, you hastily and unhappily conclude, that it is a matter of no great importance *what* doctrinal opinions men entertain, provided they be honest and sincere. This sentiment contains the essence of modern liberality, and, therefore, merits the most serious consideration. Let us, then, push it to its legitimate consequences: the Hindoo is sincere in his idolatry, the Mahometan in his belief of the Koran, the Catholic in his avowal of Transubstantiation, the Calvinist in his adoption of Predestination, and the Ranter in all his wild and ignorant fanatacism. Now, I freely admit, that genuine charity teaches us to avoid condemning any of these as enemies of God, and leads us to hope, that, under his merciful and inscrutable Providence, a way of escape may be provided for them; but, do we not believe, that they are in serious error, that a knowledge of “the truth as it is in Jesus” would be eminently conducive to their virtue and happiness, and that we should use all reasonable and practical means for their conversion? We have so frequently seen a zeal for the propagation of what men believe to be the truth, accompanied by a persecuting and intolerant spirit, that we are too

apt to confound charity with indifference. In reality, however, no two principles can be more directly opposed to each other. Indifference is sluggish, inactive, and regardless of results; charity is active, vigilant, interested in the welfare of the brethren, and "rejoiceth in the Truth." Ask yourselves, then, my fellow-Christians, is the *Liberality* which induces you, against your convictions, to remain in connexion with an intolerant and truth-suppressing church, the genuine offspring of charity, or the unhallowed progeny of indifference? Believe me, the greatest zeal for the advancement of those opinions which we conceive to be sanctioned by the Word of God, is perfectly compatible with the most perfect charity towards those who conscientiously dissent from our conclusions. But, the Gospel knows nothing of that spurious charity which confounds truth with error, leagues toleration with persecution, permits men to wander in the mazes of folly without an effort to restore them, and even encourages them to continue in the wrong path by the sanction of example! Gloss it over as you will, my brethren, your continuance in a Trinitarian and Calvinistic Church, whose principles you disapprove, and whose practices you abhor, is not genuine, christian liberality, but criminal and discreditable lukewarmness. To say that you reprobate the proceedings of that Church, that you do not conceal your sentiments concerning its doctrines and discipline, only renders you the less excusable. The man who believes and approves incurs little blame; but in admitting your disapprobation, you pass sentence upon yourselves. You give your countenance, your support, your moral and social influence, to a system of Doctrine and Church Government, which, in your souls, you believe to be opposed to the Word of God, and consequently injurious to man; whilst you withhold them from principles and from a cause which command your approbation and esteem. I put it to you affectionately and seriously, is this a liberality, is this a charity, sanctioned by the Gospel of Truth? It is a reproach, frequently and not unjustly cast upon Unitarians, that they hold their principles with too much laxity, and too little zeal. The very charity which prevents them from dooming their opponents to temporal privations and eternal misery, engenders a deplorable lukewarmness with regard to the advancement of their own opinions: as if it

were a matter of no importance, whether the world should be influenced by a cheering and holy Faith, equally honourable to God and profitable to man, or that it should lie under the deep gloom of a system which robs the Creator of his paternal justice, and renders man the passive and irresponsible instrument of a fatal destiny. I beseech you, brethren, reflect upon these things. You believe that you have the *truth*, you feel that you have the *spirit* of the Gospel, on your side. Can you, then, without awful responsibility, dream away your lives in thoughtless indifference, whilst you ought to be evincing your gratitude to Heaven, and your love to men, by your strenuous and unwearied exertions for the ample diffusion of light, and liberty, and peace!

But, I am aware, that to the plea of *liberality*, many of you add the additional one, of “not desiring to disturb the harmony of the Congregations with which you have long been connected.” This is a laudable sentiment, for which I honour you; but, like most other amiable feelings, it may be carried to excess. Had this principle, in the extent to which you carry it, been acted upon by our Saviour and his Apostles, Christianity would never have had a name on the earth: had it been in full operation during the sixteenth century, the Reformation from Popery never would have occurred; and, had our Scottish ancestors been guided by it, the Presbyterian Church would never have possessed an existence. A well known Proverb forcibly observes, that “a man may buy gold too dear;” and it is not less true, that we may purchase *peace* at too high a price—if we buy it at the expense of conscience. Now, my brethren, if there be any thing upon earth, in which unmingled sincerity, and entire abstraction from all temporal interests are not only becoming but indispensable, it is in our solemn addresses to God, in the exercise of devotion. Then, at least, all should be pure, and calm, and untainted by the world. But, I seriously ask you, is this your condition, whilst, for the sake of a *hollow peace*, you habitually worship in Trinitarian Temples, give your outward consent to what you do not believe, countenance the dissemination of error and the suppression of truth, and league yourselves with the inveterate enemies of Christian liberty? You believe, on the sure warrant of Scripture, that there is *only* ONE God, and that his ever Blessed Son was “the first-

born of every *creature*, the beginning of the *creation* of God :” You believe farther, on the same divine authority, that the Lord Jesus, both before his death and after his ascension, absolutely forbade men to worship him : and, you consequently believe, that *The Father alone* is the proper object of Prayer and Homage. Now, brethren, entertaining these opinions, you *habitually* worship in Trinitarian Meeting-houses ; and you must either join in the devotional exercises seriously and with your whole hearts, or hypocritically and for exhibition. If you do the former, and actually worship the *Son*, upon your own avowed principles, you are guilty of *idolatry* ; if you do the latter, and outwardly assent to what you inwardly disbelieve, you carry a vain and false profession into the sanctuary of God ! I do not say, that a Trinitarian, who worships Christ, is justly chargeable with the crime of idolatry ; but, I do confess, that a Unitarian who worships the Lord Jesus, appears to me to have no way of escaping from the imputation. Have you ever solemnly contemplated your conduct in this point of view ? Have you ever seriously considered the indispensableness of purity to an acceptable worship ? Have you ever reflected, that prayer is the spring and essence of religion ? If you have done these things, I am convinced, you will freely confess, that in sacrificing your own conscientious convictions upon the altar of peace, you have made an offering which God cannot receive, which man cannot approve, and which your own hearts must condemn ! Have you ever known your Trinitarian brethren to act upon the principle of sacrificing their convictions for peace ? No : they may be in error ; they may want charity ; but, they at least act openly, manfully, and consistently. They do not give the aid of their purse, their time, and their character, to what, in their hearts, they believe to be opposed to the Word of God. How many separate societies have they formed, of late years, in vindication of their principles, although, in general, they are the less affluent portion of the community ? In what place, during the late separation of the Synod of Ulster, have they submitted, even when in a decided *minority*, to the suppression of their sentiments, and the virtual desertion of their cause, for the sake of hollow tranquillity and nominal union ? I do not say, that their conduct has always been blameless, in these struggles. On the contrary,

I know, that under the influence of ambitious and unprincipled advisers, it has frequently been deceitful, persecuting, dishonest, and outrageous. So far, it merits reprobation, and admits of no defence: but, although the *means* may have been, in several cases, worthless and dishonourable, the *ends* which they had in view—viz. the maintenance of what they believed to be their rights, and the advancement of what they conceived to be the truth—deserve our approbation. What have *you* done, in comparison, during the last three years, for the advancement of the great cause of Christianity? What new temples have you dedicated to the service of “the *only* living and true God”? *Not one!* Nay, you have allowed several of the old temples to fall into the hands of your opponents, where you had both numbers and influence to retain them for the cause of truth and liberty, if you had not tamely and discredibly allowed them to be wrested from you, on the idle plea of not wishing to disturb the harmony of your congregations! Multitudes of you have placed yourselves and your children under the yoke of bondage, because you wanted the zeal and the fortitude to maintain your Christian privileges! In such cases, you are altogether without excuse: and, even where you are but a minority, I confess that I do not see how you can fairly reconcile it with honour and conscience, tamely to acquiesce in the suppression of your opinions, and the deprivation of your rights. God forbid, that I should urge you to disturb the peace of Christian societies, or to trample upon the interests and liberties of conscientious Ministers, as so many of the *orthodox* have done. No: all I wish is, that where you cannot prevail upon the majority of your fellow-worshippers to join you in leaving “the house of bondage,” you should peacefully retire from amongst them, and no longer afford the sanction of your names, to principles and proceedings which you utterly condemn. More than this, you ought not to do; less than this, I solemnly believe, you cannot do, with a safe conscience and fair reputation, in the sight of God and man. Trust me, brethren, it is no light affair to league yourselves with error and intolerance, to connive at the destruction of truth, to place your children and your friends under the direction of “blind guides,” and to sacrifice upon the altar of a spurious liberality and unhal-
lowed peace, the highest interest and privileges which

God has committed to your care, as rational and accountable beings! Charity, towards those who are in error, is a duty: but the encouragement of error is a crime. The commandment of God upon this very subject, is explicit and awful. Speaking of an erroneous church, He thus addresses his people: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"! Is there any license here, for their courting peace, at the expense of conviction? No, my brethren; there should be no compromise between truth and falsehood; as there can be no union of light with darkness, and "no fellowship between Christ and Belial." "Follow peace with all men," as you are expressly commanded: but, where an honest peace cannot be attained in union, it is the part both of wisdom and virtue, to seek for it in separation. Tell me not, that you want the *means* to erect places of worship, and to support Ministers. In some instances, this plea may be well founded; but, I know twenty places in Ulster, where you have ample means and numbers to erect flourishing congregations, if you had only the zeal and the energy to make a beginning. I could easily point out several places, where you have in your ranks almost the entire wealth, intelligence, and respectability of the community, and yet permit yourselves to be thwarted and bullied by the ignorant multitude around you. Had the orthodox *one tenth* of the social and moral influence which you possess in certain towns and districts, they would, under similar circumstances, establish congregations. With a good cause, and the blessing of Providence, a *beginning* is every thing. "The grain of mustard seed" sends forth a plant that affords "shelter to the fowls of heaven": the diminutive acorn produces the monarch of the forest: and the disciples of the Lord originally met "in a small upper room at Jerusalem." Our Unitarian brethren of England felt and understood these things. They did not linger, in cold indifference, until a powerful congregation should spring up, all at once, vigorous and perfect, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Wherever they found a few congenial spirits, sometimes merely the members of a single family, they left those temples in which they could not worship honestly and acceptably, assembled in private rooms or dwellings, went through a faithful service without a Minister, and edified each other by conversation and

prayer. As their numbers increased, they obtained occasional assistance from the Pastors of neighbouring congregations, until they were able to erect a Meeting-house, and procure the services of a stated Pastor. The larger societies helped the weaker ; and from such small beginnings, many of the most important congregations in England took their rise. They can now boast of 400 worshipping societies, unequalled for their intelligence, their social influence, and their moral respectability. These great results were produced by an honest and enlightened zeal, in despite of prejudice, and interest, and clamour, and civil penalties, and social persecution. Oh ! my brethren, what might not *you* accomplish, in the present times, with the spirit of the age, and the liberalized institutions of the country, conspiring to befriend you ! The current of Civil and Religious Liberty is rolling along with an irresistible force, and sweeping before it all the antiquated mounds of bigotry and oppression. The people are rapidly advancing in a knowledge of their rights ; neither priests nor statesmen can long enthrall them with chains ; and I firmly believe, that “ the days of reformation ” are literally at hand. But, the Almighty works for the benefit of his rational offspring, by rational, human agency. If we would truly enjoy the blessing of heaven, we must labour to obtain it in the way of God’s appointment. To you, brethren, a glorious field of honour and usefulness is opened up. If you enter, and cultivate it with energy and care, you will prepare a rich harvest of liberty and peace, of rational religion and moral harmony, for yourselves and your children : but, if through indolence and indifference, you suffer it to be polluted by weeds, or sown with tares by the enemy, how great will be your shame, how righteous your condemnation ! Come out from among the worshippers of fashion, of interest, or of error ; not in enmity to them, but in love to truth, and your own souls, and the happiness of millions, who may be affected by your energy, your discretion, and your integrity. There are established Bodies, ready to receive, to advise, to strengthen you. “ Fear not, little flock.” Organize Societies : try your powers : compare your ideas and feelings : read and pray with each other : cease to worship with the lips, where the heart and mind deny their homage : call upon liberal Ministers for occasional services, until you feel that you are treading on sure ground : fear-

lessly erect the banner of liberty and truth ; and you may rest assured, that thousands, and tens of thousands, will rally round the sacred standard. Your firmness, your honesty, your self-denial, may cost you some sacrifices, and break in upon some early associations : but, believe me, you will eventually secure that treasure which is above all value—" that peace of mind which passeth all understanding."

Many of you, I am aware, have almost exclusively reared those places of worship, from which you may be compelled to retire, in consequence of the perfidious and intolerant proceedings of the Synod of Ulster. I confess, that it is very hard, to be deprived of your just rights in vindication of conscience ; to surrender into the hands of an ignorant and prejudiced multitude, the sacred legacy of your ancestors, and the fruit of your own industry and care, which you expected to transmit to your posterity : it is very hard, to leave the temple in which you first publicly worshipped your Creator, to the sole use of men who had neither the ability nor the inclination to assist in its erection : all this is abundantly trying ; and the enemies of your faith have thoroughly calculated the strong hold which they have, over your interests and your social affections. But, the life of the true christian is a life of sacrifice to conscience and to duty : and, I will not insult you by insinuating, that you can, for one moment, hesitate to choose, when the alternative is, the sacrifice of your earthly attachments and convenience, or the forfeiture of your integrity to God ! In matters of " meats and ceremonies"—in concerns of comparative indifference, it may be the part of prudence to exercise caution, and to avoid precipitancy : but, surely, hesitation is itself a crime, on a question of such *vital* importance, as whether we shall serve our Creator freely and faithfully, agreeably to the dictates of our own minds, or with constraint and hypocrisy, at the insolent dictation of our fellow worms ! "How long halt ye between two opinions ? If God be the Lord, follow him : but, if Baal, then follow him.—Choose ye, this day whom ye will serve : but, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

It has been suggested to me, Brethren, that I ought to address myself with peculiar earnestness, to those amongst you, who adhere to Churches of whose discipline, doctrine, or proceedings you disapprove, because such sinful ac-

quiescence in the popular and patronised opinions of the day, may be conducive to your worldly interest, or calculated to render you more welcome in the circles of fashion. It is highly probable, that there may be some such worthless beings amongst you; for there are men of all churches and all creeds, who make a trade of religion; yet, I shall not intrude upon your calculations of gain, or disturb your dreams of honour. Were you acting from an error of judgment, or an amiable weakness of the heart, like those whom I have already addressed, I might possibly speak to you in the language of friendly expostulation: but, as you have calmly and deliberately taken your stand upon the ground of preferring earth to heaven, and the applause of the world to the approbation of God, I shall not undertake the hopeless task of admonition. The Scripture asserts, that “the world and the fashion thereof passeth away;” and sad experience may probably teach you, that Paul is no unkind instructor, when he exhorts us “not to be conformed to this world.”

There is, however, an influential and important class of persons, to whom, in the spirit of perfect good-will, I would address a very few observations; I mean those Ministers of the Gospel, who still adhere to the General Synod, whilst they condemn its recent enactments, and in their hearts, disown the unscriptural doctrines of reputed Orthodoxy. To you, my clerical Brethren, what shall I say? I know most of you well—very well.—Without perhaps a single exception, you are men of sound heads and good hearts; yet, in what an awkward, I had nearly said awful, predicament, do you stand!—By the Laws of the Synod, you are forbidden to license any Student holding those views of the Gospel which you yourselves consider to be accordant with Divine Truth; and you are compelled to license those, and those *only*, who are directly opposed to you, on almost every point of doctrine! Or, in other words, you stand calmly by, at the license of candidates for the Ministry, and behold truth expiring as a victim, upon the altar of error. In the next place, you associate in Presbyteries and Synods, with men who take every opportunity of denouncing your opinions as “blasphemies, soul-destroying heresies,” &c. and who call yourselves, “Atheists, Deists, Infidels, and Deniers of the Lord that bought you.” Nay, on the most solemn occasions, indeed, upon all occasions, many of you

dare not admit into your pulpits any man holding your own views of Divine Truth ; or, at least, any man who would honestly preach them. Again, you are completely trammelled, in your private intercourse and public services amongst your people : for there is not one of you who dares to impugn the doctrine of the Trinity or vicarious atonement. And last, and worst of all—when you anticipate the time in which you will require Assistants, you know that none *can* be chosen to that interesting situation, who will not be solemnly bound up, to preach from your pulpits, in your very faces, and to teach to your friends and children, doctrines, which, in your inmost souls, you believe to be directly opposed to the word of God ! My heart bleeds for you, when I see the straits to which you are thus reduced ; and although I cannot free you from blame, in submitting to be so enthralled, I far more condemn the heartless authors of your misfortune ; who, to gratify personal hatred or a vile ambition, have strewn your paths with thorns and briars. I am no stranger to the pleas by which you attempt to justify your submission to a tyranny so hateful : nor do I say, that, to *yourselves*, they may not appear valid. You urge, and I am persuaded, truly urge, “ that if you do not preach *all* you think, you never preach what you *do* not think.” Now, brethren, sift this plea to the bottom, and you will find much chaff. The duty of a Minister of the Gospels, to “ preach the *whole* counsel of God :” But how do you obey this injunction, when you only preach a *part* ? Besides, is not a wilful suppression of the truth, a virtual inculcation of falsehood ; especially, when coupled with the fact, that under your sanction, others openly preach what you consider error ? Your next plea is—“ that, if you resigned your congregations, they would be entirely fed upon Orthodoxy, instead of only tasting it, occasionally, as at present.” This is all very well as a jest ; but, you cannot intend seriously to allege, that you are justified in committing a minor offence, because some other individual may chance to commit a greater ! Just as little foundation has your last excuse “ that you remain with the Synod, in order to bring them round to right views !” This is exactly upon a par with the explanation of an Italian Priest who was taken with a horde of banditti, whilst assisting them to plunder some hapless travellers. He assumed an air of injured innocence, and declared “ that he had certainly been

their companion for seven years, but merely that he might have an opportunity of weaning them from their wicked ways!" "When there shall be windows in heaven—when the leopard shall change his spots, and the Ethiopian his skin"—then, and not till then, will the unprincipled oligarchy that now rules the Synod of Ulster, relax the grasp of its iron despotism.

Why do I mention these things? Not to reproach you, brethren. I consider you the victims of unfortunate circumstances, rather than as acting from unworthy motives. Very many of you, I sincerely respect; though I must lament the untoward events of your lot. I address you, merely for the purpose of making a suggestion, which might be serviceable both to you and to your congregations. My firm persuasion, strengthened by experience, is, that if your people thoroughly understood Orthodoxy and Newlight—if they saw Calvinism fairly contrasted with rational Christianity—they would give up their Orthodoxy, and embrace your own opinions. At present, they only know Unitarianism through the unprincipled slanders of the Orthodox pulpit, and press.—Were I myself to judge of it only from these, I should look upon it as the offspring of madness and blasphemy. Now, my suggestion is—that you should, after due notice, lay your opinions fully and fairly before your people, in a regular series of discourses, and by private or public conversations. If you can convince them that you are right, then, all will be well: if you fail to do this, in the name of consistency and truth, let there be an amicable division of property, and a friendly separation. Should the party which may remain with you be too weak to sustain themselves, the liberal Dissenters of Ireland will assist them: and should the other party be too feeble, the General Synod could extend its fostering arms. I put it to you, seriously and solemnly, would not this be honest, prudent, beneficial? You could then speak "the *whole* counsel of God," to your own adherents; and those who left you would be more than *half* fed. For your own sakes, for the good of your people, for the honour of the Presbyterian name, for the sake of immortal souls, and for the glory of that God "who loveth truth in the inward parts," I beseech you to consider seriously, a proposition which is made in the spirit of the most perfect good-will. I hope that you will take it up; or if not,

that your people will exercise their undoubted right, and solemnly call upon you to state your opinions upon the great controverted Doctrines of the day. These are no times for a cautious neutrality; for mincing, and compromising, and postponing. Every congregation should *demand* from their Minister, a candour becoming the sanctity and importance of his office. We would never have seen these evil days, had Ministers spoken out and done their duty.

In my next, I shall address the Orthodox Presbyterians. In the mean time, believe me to be, Brethren,

Your faithful Friend,

CHRISTIANUS.

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

The writer's first impressions, from childhood, had always been, that Christ pre-existed with the Father before the world was, agreeable to his cursory reading of the Bible, in the course of his education, in which he met with many of the texts brought forward by *Ereunetes* in his support of the Arian scheme. Considering the Almighty the author of all, capable of endowing the messenger of his great plan to recover the human race from the state of ignorance of his person and providence (which it had fallen into during the lapse of years) with every power necessary to effect the purpose for which he was sent, he never laid great stress on the character of the messenger, whether a pre-existent being, who was in the confidence of the Almighty before his appearance in Judea, or whether he was a human being of pure manners, selected out of his brethren, endowed with all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and so made capable of executing the divine commission. After he came to England, he met with books, advocating the Humanitarian scheme, in which were a great number of texts supporting it, that appeared to him, in number and clearness, rather to overweigh those supposed to prove the pre-existence—and thus left the question a matter of doubt in his mind, but by no means of anxious or painful doubt. In either case, he looked to the Father only as the source, and that the messenger only spoke as he gave utterance.

While his mind was balancing one set of texts against the other, without any bias, in full persuasion that a preference to either scheme before the other could not be essential to his being a true Christian, and so far agreeing with *Ereunetes*—by some accident the prophecy, that the Christ should be a sprig from the root of Jesse, a descendant from David, presented itself to him as a confirmation of the Humanitarian scheme. He does not call it Socinian, as Socinus, he believes, taught, that divine worship ought to be paid to Christ—a doctrine abhorrent to Humanitarians, and in his opinion in direct opposition to Christ's commands. By the way, it is to be lamented that in such a correct work as the *Bible Christian*, names should be applied to sects, that they have disclaimed publicly, and which are applied to them by their adversaries as terms of reproach. To proceed ; the writer has always been accustomed to look upon prophecy, as one of the proofs of the Divine mission of Christ, when naturally, and without force shown to be fulfilled. It is certain the Jews depended much upon it, and looked for their Messiah only in their descendant from David ; nor can it be expected they should ever come into the Christian scheme, if that idea cannot be supported, and Jesus not the son of Joseph, who is proved by St. Luke's genealogy to be a direct descendant from David, Jesse, and Abraham.—Considering him as the Unitarians, or, if it is to be preferred, Humanitarians do, the son of Joseph, a human being, divinely endowed for his great mission, the prophecies are clearly fulfilled, and the Jews can conscientiously admit him to have been their Messiah ; and the descent through Mary, it is not probable the Jews would admit as sufficient. The writer has looked into all the books on the pre-existing scheme that came in his way, to know how it was made to accord with prophecy, but has not found in any that the attempt is made. Is not the fulfilment of prophecy material to support the Christian scheme ? If *Ereunetes*, who has so ably treated the Trinitarian scheme, will turn this matter in his mind, and write on the Prophecies as affected by the Pre-existent scheme, he may remove a strong objection to it, which, with the question how, if a supernatural being, Christ's conduct in life can be any example to human beings, certainly destroyed the balance, and impressed the writer's mind in favour of Humanitarianism, notwithstanding his

early impressions. His mind is, however, still open, and desirous of any rational information—ready to adopt either scheme; being satisfied, if acted up to in humility, he will not be reproached for his faith at the last day. He is, however, exceedingly desirous to have the Prophecies put in a clear point of view, as it might remove the objections of the Jews.

AN ENQUIRER.

January, 1831.

ON THE REAL ESSENTIALS AND FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION.

The Synod of Ulster, for more than half a century, afforded the truly edifying and christian spectacle of men, differing very considerably from one another on religious subjects, yet living together in amity and peace. Of late years a very different spirit has actuated that body; and has led to the most painful and humiliating consequences. A few *self-styled Orthodox* and domineering men kindled the firebrand of discord, and under the plea of reformation, rent asunder the charities of religion and life. Their course has been to exclude from communion, all who cannot adopt the *Shibboleth* of a party, and stoop to receive the dogmas which they think proper to decree, as essential and fundamental. Their system has been to deny christian fellowship, and the christian name, to all who differ from them beyond a certain point; which they assume to themselves the right to fix, and alter as they please. They do not deny you the right to think, provided only you think *as they have prescribed*; but the moment you go beyond this, you are excluded from their communion; you cease to be a *Christian* you are a *Deist* and *Infidel*. When challenged to the field of fair and open controversy, when called upon to support their opinions, not by the shouts of a multitude, but the Word of God; to defend themselves from the charge of *inconsistency* and *untruth*; what has been the reply? *Silence!* Now all this may have been prudent, but it affords a melancholy proof of the conscious weakness of their conduct, and rottenness of their cause.

In some respects, however, they have the advantage over *Bible Christians*. In hardihood of assertion, in evasion and equivocation, in the use of popular but ambiguous phrases, which they turn and twist at their will; and above all, in the use of the artful plea of mystery when reduced to absurdity or contradiction, they must bear off the palm triumphant. In this and a succeeding letter, I intend, should these observations be thought deserving a place in your useful publication, 1st, to inquire into the right of any church to decree what is fundamental and essential in religion; 2dly, as the Synod of Ulster has exercised this power, how far what she has declared to be such, is "founded on," and "agreeable to the Word of God." An opportunity will thus be afforded to the advocates of Orthodoxy, to come forward, and defend the authority they have exercised; or, as usual, acknowledge the rottenness of their principles and conduct, *by their silence*.

I shall assume for the present, that Christianity, like every thing else, must have that which is essential; that is, which makes it the religion it is, as distinct from every other; and that it must 'also have what is fundamental, that is a foundation on which it rests.

I shall also assume it for the present, that whatever is essential and fundamental in christianity, is the same in the salvation of the Christian; and as the learned and unlearned are equally concerned here, whatever is such, must be plainly and distinctly revealed.

I shall also assume it, that wherever there is an agreement in what is essential and fundamental, there Christian communion, not only may, but should exist; and to allow any thing to interrupt this, is an evidence of an unchristian spirit. In all other things relating to religion, mutual forbearance and charity should be exercised. Unless this principle is allowed and adopted, there never could be a Christian Church. All communion must be destroyed, and there would be as many Churches as there are men.

Assuming these things, the next inquiry that presents itself is, where shall we find what is essential and fundamental in our salvation? And 2dly, supposing us to differ, who shall decide? All Protestant Churches agree on referring us to the Bible, as containing all that is necessary and essential to our salvation. But it is

notorious, that when they come to interpret this book, they differ materially among themselves; one party maintaining a certain doctrine to be fundamental, which another declares, is no where to be found in the whole Word of God; or if found, is never declared to be essential. Amidst such discrepancy who shall determine? The Church. What Church? Let us see—Oh! says the Church of Rome, I am the mother of Churches.—The Fathers were in me. I have always had the true faith, and taught my children all that was essential to salvation. All my decisions have been made under the direction of the Holy Ghost. *I am infallible!* no other church has ever dared to claim infallibility, except myself. I alone, therefore, have a right to decree, and I have decreed, all that is essential and fundamental in religion.

“You decree,” replies the Church of England! Who gave you a right to decree? You who are “the mother of harlots,” a “vile and filthy harlot;” I am a “reformed church,” the only “pure reformed church,” the “purest, and most Apostolical upon earth.” I have abandoned your corruptions and pollutions; therefore, I have a right to decree, and in my thirty-nine Articles, I have decreed “what is the Christian verity.”

What effrontery and assurance, reply the Presbyterian Churches! How do you assume the right to decide what is Christian truth; you, who, upon the confession of some of the greatest ornaments of your own body, are only half reformed from the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome; you, who have lorded a most unhallowed authority over the heritage of God, who have exercised the authority of the Church of Rome, in binding the consciences of men; and when they could not comply with your injunctions to use Popish vestments and ceremonies, your persecutions forced into Dissenters, a large portion of the piety, talent, and learning of your body. We alone, like the first followers of our great Lord and head, are *meek and saintly men*. We have retained no remnant of the “Scarlet whore,”—we arrogate no pompous and lordly titles. We are the only true followers of Christ; and we alone declare “the truth as it is in Jesus.” If you wish to see what it is, we refer you to the writings of Calvin, the decrees of the Synod of Dort, or the Con-

fession and Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly. If you affect to be shocked by any of our opinions, we tell you, it is because you have not "the teaching of the Spirit of God."

True; replies the Synod of Ulster. The Churches of Rome and England have assumed a most antichristian power, in attempting to decree Articles of Faith for Protestants, and to bind our consciences; but you have a right to decree, what in all time to come, shall be Christian truth. We will adopt your decisions, and bind them upon our hearers, and their children, down to the latest posterity. We lament and deplore the *unchristian state of peace, forbearance, and kindness* in which our body has so long remained. Let us have a holy war, a crusade against men who have risen up among us, and whom hypocritically we called our brethren, and let us "have Christ preached of envy and of strife." They have dared to deny us the soul-comforting doctrine, that God did, "for the glory of his justice," decree irreversibly, and from all eternity, the damnation of the greater part of our race; that is, *he decreed their damnation eternally before he created them*. Nay, some of them, walking in the steps of their *Remonstrant fathers*, who for this and other heresies were expelled the Synod of Dort, have even refused to allow us the *pleasing and delightful hope*, of the damnation of infants, and have dared to maintain, that God will not on account of Adam's sin consign to eternal perdition the babe who never thought against its God, for it was incapable of thought, and never spoke or acted against him, for it was incapable of speech or action. We decree, therefore, that we shall have a holy war, and no peace. Overtured therefore, and agreed to, &c.

But, replies the Church of Rome, you are schismatics and heretics. Christ is one, the Church is one, the truth of the Holy Ghost is one. We cannot teach the Calvinist to believe in Predestination and Reprobation, and the Arminian to deny both; and yet both of you pretend to the teaching of the Holy Ghost. It is evident, therefore, that neither of you can possess that, to which both of you, with equal hardihood and presumption, lay claim.

Who now shall decide? The Church of Rome for the Church of England? No. The Presbyterian Church for that of Rome? No: she can arrogate no such autho-

rity ; and in claiming this power, she would only prove herself to be " Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition " ! But let us see if these Churches have not decided for each other, not only what is essential to salvation, but that each has represented its opponent, from not believing particular doctrines, as " travelling in the broad road to destruction." Has the Church of Rome never decided thus, of the followers of the Church of England ? Has she not pronounced them heretics ? Turn to her decrees against heresy, and see what she has determined. Let us again see whether the Church of England and the Presbyterian Church have been slow in returning the compliment. In their turn, they have pronounced her to be superstitious and idolatrous ; and until a late act of the legislature, no man could take his seat as a member of parliament, unless upon swearing that her doctrines were " damnable and idolatrous." Orthodoxy, schooled in the art of twisting and turning, may explain away these expressions as it pleases ; but in the fair construction of language, that only is damnable which damns ; and a child who has read his bible, knows the final sentence which God has pronounced against idolaters. With what truth then can it be said, these Churches do not claim the right of each deciding what is essential in doctrine for the salvation of the other, when they so positively decree the final perdition of each other, solely on account of the opinions respectively entertained ?

But I shall be told, perhaps, that, however other Churches may have acted, the Synod of Ulster have never assumed the right of deciding respecting the final state of any. All they have done is merely to decree what in all coming time shall be the faith of their own Church. Let us inquire how far this is the fact. Now, is it not undeniable, that in full and crowded meetings of that body, many of its members were not only unrebuked, but cheered, when they foully and falsely proclaimed men, whom they once called brethren, " rejecters of the Bible," " Deists," " Infidels," " deniers of the Lord who bought them," &c. &c. Now, unless you can show that the professed believer in Revelation may be a Deist, that is a denier of Revelation, and be saved ; or that the Minister of religion may be a denier of the Lord Jesus, and with all this awful hypocrisy upon his head yet be saved : you must admit, that this is not only dictating to the con-

sciences of others, but pronouncing their final perdition. But again, is it not the fact, that men with whom the Synod once held ministerial communion, it has forced from its communion? Why does it refuse them now, the privileges they once enjoyed? They are only excluded from the communion of the Church here, because the Synod believes they *will be excluded from heaven hereafter*. Justify your proceedings upon any other ground if you can; but you will not surely have the hardihood to refuse the right hand of fellowship to the man, whom at a last and awful day of retribution, Jesus met place at *his* right hand. Is it not evident, therefore, that the Synod, in thus ejecting from its communion, men who were once admitted, whose only crime consisted in refusing to allow others, no wiser or better than themselves, to prescribe Articles of Faith which should bind their consciences, is not only claiming the right to decree for their brethren what is essential to salvation, but also deciding upon their future destiny.

But it has been asked, will you deny to a Church, the power which every society enjoys, of making the laws by which members shall be admitted? Undoubtedly she has no such power. In this she differs from all other societies. The laws by which her members shall be admitted, and governed, are prescribed already by Jesus Christ, her only king and head; and all the power she has a right to exercise, is to see his laws carried into effect. The Church has no power to make any law which shall bind the conscience of her members, because she is not the lord of conscience.

But has not every Church, for itself, the power of prescribing what shall be the faith of its members? We shall understand this question better, when we inquire what is meant by the thing called Church, which thus assumes the right of dictating to its members, what they must believe, on pain of exclusion from its privileges. The Bible is our only standard; and with the Bible we have only to do. In the New Testament, I find the word Church used obviously and plainly in two different senses. I find it first used to express the body of Believers generally. Pray, Gentlemen of the Synod, do you claim to be *this*, and are there no Believers in the world but yourselves! I find it, 2dly, used to express a *society of persons associated for the purpose of religious worship*. Is the Synod of Ulster a Church in this sense of the word? You

profess to be the *representatives* of a variety of such religious societies, meeting together, and claiming to be their Church; for on this ground only, can you justify the powers you exercise, of ruling the faith, the property, and the conduct of the societies you represent. You are not, therefore, a Church in the second sense of the word. In what meaning of the expression are you a Church, and in what part of the New Testament is it so used? Where is the passage, which gives you the right to rule *the faith and the money concerns* of the Churches you profess to govern? Where is the Scripture which gives *you* the right to decree, not only what *you* believe to be essential and fundamental, but also what all who differ from you must receive, on pain of excision from the Churches. You have either the authority of the word of God for this, or you are *usurpers*. This in an inquiry into an historical fact. You can tell us, therefore, where this power has ever been exercised in the Church, by uninspired men; where such authority has been given to the Church; in what portion of the Church it is vested, and what you mean by Church. We now challenge you to come forward, and defend the powers you have exercised, or stand convicted of an unscriptural usurpation.

By far the most general use of the term Church, in the New Testament, is a society of persons meeting together for the purpose of religious worship. Now what right has such a society to decree what shall, on pain of exclusion from Christian communion, be the faith of another association, meeting in a different part of the country? What right, for instance, has the Orthodox Church in May-street, to decree what shall be the faith of the Orthodox Church in Carrickfergus? Is it because the title of an American Doctor belongs to the minister who is placed at the head of the one, whilst an untitled preacher officiates in the other? Or whilst the Church in May-street dictates to the Christians of Carrickfergus, has the Carrickfergus Church the right, in its turn, to decree what shall be the faith of its Orthodox sister? Neither can shew any such right; it is an unwarrantable and unscriptural assumption. How then can an association, composed of any ten or twenty of these, meeting by their representatives, possess the right of decreeing what shall be the faith of the Church at Moneyrea, on the pain of exclusion, to that society, from all Christian communion?

Where in the New Testament are they vested with such power, and where is the instance of any Church, or Churches, thus interfering with a sister Church, to decree what must be her faith, or to excommunicate her for heresy. We challenge, we defy you to produce any such instance.

But, by the term Church, you mean the office-bearers in the Church. Do you, indeed! Where then, in the New Testament, is the word so used, and where are such vested with the power to decree what is fundamental or essential? Pray, good Orthodox members of the Synod of Ulster, do tell us, what you mean by Church, and where in the Bible we shall find it clothed with the powers which you have assumed? Until you do this, *stand branded* with using a scriptural phrase in an unscriptural sense, and founding upon this the exercise of unscriptural and unhallowed power. You know the constitution of the Synod of Ulster. You call it, when assembled, the *Presbyterian Church*; for on this ground only, can you proceed to exercise Church power. In the exercise of this power, you decree what in all time to come shall be essential and fundamental in that body; what doctrines shall be preached in its pulpits; and pronounce the highest ecclesiastical censure, excision from the body, upon all who, in the humble exercise of their own judgments, shall dare to preach any other. Orthodox members of the Synod of Ulster, stand forward, and defend the name you have assumed, and the powers you use, or stand convicted of unscriptural usurpation in both. Tell us where deputies from a number of Churches are ever called the Church, in the New Testament, or where they are vested with authority to exercise the powers of the Church. But above all, produce your charter for what you have done, which gives you the power to decree what shall be taught in the Churches, and what shall be regarded as essential and fundamental, not only by yourselves, but in all succeeding time.

But perhaps I shall be told, it is not you, but the Word of God which has decreed what is essential and fundamental. To this authority we bow with reverence. But we ask, where has it declared the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, Justification by Faith alone, &c. to be essential and fundamental? We challenge, we defy you to produce the passage in the whole Word of God, where

they are pronounced to be such. How then do you pretend to force upon others, who have equally with yourselves the Bible in their hands, doctrines, the *very name of which* is not to be found in the Scriptures, which you have been challenged to express in the language of Scripture, and have never been able; which, in the exercise of your own authority alone, have been pronounced to be essential, but which the word of God has never so declared. How is *your* interpretation of the Bible alone infallible, whilst all others are in error. Establish your claims to infallibility, and we shall bow; but do not, as you have often *lamentably* done before, afford us the clearest proofs, that you are weak, ignorant, prejudiced, and erring, and then demand from us the submission which we can only pay to infallibility. We cannot, we will not, we dare not yield it. We owe you no allegiance. We owe it only to Jesus and his word. In my next, I shall proceed to enquire how far the doctrines which you bind upon men's consciences in the Synod of Ulster, and for which you have rent that body in twain, are,—as you oblige men solemnly to subscribe and declare,—the fundamental and essential truths of the Word of God; or only declared to be such by the authority of fallible men.—In the meantime I remain, W.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN AMERICA.

Having been favoured by a Friend. with a copy of the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, which met in Philadelphia, on the 20th of May 1830, I conceive that a few extracts will not be unsuitable to the plan you have prescribed to yourself, nor unacceptable to the readers of the *Bible Christian*. The whole work might be read with a high degree of interest; but for the present, I content myself with the following:—

The Presbyterian Church in America appears from the minutes, to consist of 19 Synods, comprising 98 Presbyteries, and having 2,158 Churches. From the summary view that is given, the number of Ministers with and wanting charges, is

...	...	...	1491
Licentiates,	...	...	220
Candidates for the Ministry,			228

—1939

Consequently, had all the Ministers, Licentiates, and Candidates obtained settlements, there would still remain 218 Churches wanting fixed Pastors. This certainly ought to be matter of encouragement to the Licentiates of this country, inasmuch as there is still scope for their labours in this great western continent, where they may be successful, and the instruments of much good, however overlooked or neglected they may have been at home.—Of their eligibility to become Pastors, there can be no doubt, as many of the Ministers and Licentiates of this province are already settled among them.

The forms of the Sessional Report to Presbytery, and of the Presbyterian Report to Synod are admirable, but have their peculiarities, adapted to a country, where Christianity is advancing, and where adults are desirous of coming under the discipline of the Presbyterian Church.

But that which most merits attention is the liberal spirit that seems to pervade the Body; and though I believe, as a Body, they profess to adhere to the Standards of Doctrine and Worship adopted by the great Reformers of preceding ages, they stand clear of that illiberal and sectarian spirit which seems to prevail so much among a certain class of Presbyterians in the Province of Ulster.

For instance, they tell us, that in the accredited constitution of their Church, it is enacted, that God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing *contrary* to his word, or *beside* it in matters of Faith and Worship; “and therefore they consider the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion, as universal and inalienable.” And what is this, but conformable to the principles laid down by the Westminster Assembly, who tell us that to believe such Doctrines, or obey such Commandments, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and that the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also, from which, alas! our modern Divines of the Synod of Ulster have widely swerved.

Again, in their letter to the Churches of France, they bewail the affecting spectacle which has been exhibited to the world in the Cantons of Berne and Vaud in Switzerland, of Protestants persecuting Protestants on account of difference in religious opinions, and because the Presbyterian Church in the United States, under the ordering

of a benign and gracious providence, know by experience the inestimable value of perfect religious liberty, they resolve,—1st, that this General Assembly do most firmly hold and maintain, that it is the undeniable right of all men, to worship the Creator according to the dictates of their own conscience ;—2dly, that they regard every attempt to restrain this right, not only as contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, but ineffectual for the promotion of genuine piety, or the prevention of diversities in religious opinion ;—3dly, that the history of their country does in their view decidedly prove that true religion is best promoted, and the peace and welfare of society best secured, by allowing perfect liberty of worship to all men.

Now if the adage be true, “ that it is lawful to be acquiring knowledge even from an enemy,” surely it is our duty to learn from those whom we profess so much to respect. The Presbyterians of the North of Ireland are seeking to open a correspondence, and to hold friendly intercourse with the Assembly of America. Measures have been entered into by the Transatlantic Brethren for that purpose. They are looked upon by us as the younger brethren; but let us not be ashamed to copy after them in these resolutions, which appear to be so conducive to the interests of Religion, and so consonant to the spirit of the Gospel.

C.

*Notice of a Letter from Rev. J. M'Alister to Lord
Templeton's Orthodox Castle Establishment.*

This is a spirited letter, occasioned by some Remarks on a speech made by the author, at a meeting of a Book Club in the Parish of Templepatrick. We can only recommend it to the diligent consideration of those to whom it is addressed, and quote one passage as a specimen of its style. Mr. M'Alister might have more pointedly exposed the folly of several persons to whom he has written : some for signing what they never examined, some for allowing their names to be put to documents which they could not even read, and some for their rashness in pronouncing

upon the opinions of Mr. Campbell, whom they had never heard :—

“ This brings me to speak of supernatural illuminations, of immediate revelations, and of extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which some individuals, in modern times, have arrogated to themselves an infallible authority, and pretended that every person is obliged to receive their ordinances as divine truths,—the obvious vehicles of inspiration. Whoever lays claim to such authority,—whoever pretends in these days, to have received certain heavenly *mandates* that are *extraordinary*,—and does not prove, by undoubted and striking miracles, that he is entitled to credit,—I am bold to say, that man is a fanatic, or perhaps something worse—he is an impostor. It is possible, I admit, that a man may have received from God a competent *understanding*, to enable him to be a guide to others in the discovery of truth, without being able to prove his principles by miracle : but, in this case, he is obliged to address himself to the *reason* and to the *judgment* of his fellow-men—he must not deal in *mysteries*. The world, now-a-days, will not receive his principles on mere *authority*, but on rational *conviction*. Now, it is notorious, you are men of *mystery*. Your spiritual guides, according to Synodical order, must teach you principles above *reason*,—matters with which *understanding* and *knowledge* are not conversant. They must teach you, according to their special *mandate*, the doctrine of the *Athanasian Trinity*, forsooth, which sets forth the monstrous, not to say idolatrous, absurdity of Three Gods, in opposition to the prime doctrine of revealed religion ;—of *original sin*, which imports that the whole human race are sentenced to everlasting perdition, by a just and merciful God, for an act of disobedience committed before they were born, and of course without their knowledge or consent ;—of *election* and *reprobation*, which implies that the day of judgment is already past, and that our everlasting doom was irreversibly sealed, ages before we were brought into existence, without any regard to our conduct whether good or evil ;—with a variety of other mysteries equally sublime and profound. But, if reason deny her assent to these dogmas—as they are mystically defined—if your pseudo-evangelicals pretend that what they teach is of too sublime or too deep a nature to be judged of by human capacity—let them then produce their “ demonstration of spirit and power,”—that is to say, let them show, by their extraordinary gifts, that their doctrines come from heaven—that they are really under the influence of a special *mandate* from the “ King of kings and Lord of lords.” You have a right to expect this from them. But if the *essential doctrines*, which they teach, as coming from God, be indeed inconsistent with the ordinary exercise of judgment, and with the benevolent feelings of the human heart ; if they are not to be found in the Scripture, in vain they flatter themselves to be moved by a *mandate* from heaven. They overthrow, besides, by their figments of creeds, the very language of which is foreign to the Scriptures—they overthrow this fundamental principle of all *Protestantism*, that “ the *Bible alone* is the only sufficient rule of faith and practice.” Thus it is, when men soar into the region of the clouds, they leave behind them hu-

man sensibilities and moral evidence ; holding converse with such stuff as dreams are made of, they gradually lose sight of the real world of life ; and, affecting an aerial and mystical evangelism, they forget that Christianity was intended for reasonable beings—was designed to lead mankind to virtue. Strange, that divines too, in explaining revelation, should overlook the very first and best argument, that we have really received that revelation from God ; I mean the argument drawn from the harmony that ought to subsist between *revelation* and the *faculties* of the beings to whom it is addressed ! A religion that is intended for all men, ought to be *intelligible* to all !

SCRIPTURE TEACHINGS RESPECTING GOD AND CHRIST:

The following is taken from *the Comparative View of the Scriptural Evidence for Trinitarianism and Unitarianism* ;—

I. Respecting JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Scriptures teach, that BESIDES HIM THERE IS NO GOD ; that by His almighty word, by His great power and out-stretched arm, ALONE, and BY HIMSELF, He created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, and that He preserveth them all ; that he is the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth ; that He is the Lord God Omnipotent, who was, and is, and is to come ; that He is the One Living and True God ; that His name alone is Jehovah, Most High over all the earth ; that He alone is perfectly holy, He alone supremely good ; that He is our Heavenly Father, the one God and Father of all, the God as well as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; that He is a Spirit whom no one hath seen, or can see, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory ; that he is the incorruptible, everlasting God, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of change, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, the blessed and only Potentate, who alone hath immortality, who liveth for ever and ever ; that he is the ONLY TRUE GOD ; that of Him, and by Him, and to Him are all things ; and to Him be glory for ever.

II. This great and glorious Being, the Scriptures declare to be the God of all grace, the Father of mercies and of all consolation : they teach us that He is just and true

in all His ways, and righteous in all His works ; and that He is LOVE ; that He so loved the world that He sent his only-begotten Son to save it ; that according to his own mercy he saved us ; that eternal life is His gift, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; that through him, He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, and that we are to love Him with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.

III. To Him, JEHOVAH, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father, the Scriptures direct us to offer religious worship, and to HIM ALONE. They command us to worship no other God ; to worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests known unto Him ; and to give thanks always, for all things, unto God, even the FATHER, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

IV. What the Scriptures teach respecting the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cannot contradict the foregoing plain and express declarations : and the great, leading, and frequently-repeated truths concerning our revered and beloved Lord, *obviously* accord with them. These are, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; that he was the servant of Jehovah ; that he was chosen by God, appointed by Him, sanctified and inspired by Him, anointed and sent by Him ; that he constantly prayed to his Father ; that his doctrine was not his own, but His who sent him, and that he spake as the Father gave him commandment ; that his meat was to do the will of Him who sent him ; that he wrought his miracles by the power which God gave him ; that of himself he could do nothing : that he received from Him his authority and prerogatives ; that he was raised from the dead by the mighty power of God ; that for his obedience unto death, to finish the work of love and mercy, God highly exalted him ; that He hath appointed him to be Lord over the dead and the living ; that He hath given him authority to execute judgment also ; and that by him He will judge the world in righteousness.

Such, in the PLAIN LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE, is the UNITARIAN'S BELIEF. He can admit nothing in OPPOSITION to it, because Revelation cannot contradict itself. He may not be able to understand a small number of ob-

scure passages ; but he is sure that they can teach nothing really different from what is plainly, repeatedly, and expressly declared, upon authority from God. And he keeps close to the great principle, **THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ONLY, IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.**

While, therefore, the Unitarian gladly admits the claims of our Lord Jesus Christ upon his *faith*, his *love*, his *gratitude*, his *veneration*, his *submissive obedience*,—while he contemplates with reverence and joy his Saviour's mission, death and resurrection, his exaltation and dignity, and his spiritual triumphs and dominion,—he has no hesitation in maintaining, as scriptural truth, the Absolute Unity, the Unrivalled Supremacy, the Essential Universal Love, the Unpurchased Mercy, and the Impartial Justice and Holiness of GOD, even the FATHER ; and he firmly believes that he is required, by the command of JEHOVAH himself, and by the *precepts* and *example* of his Son Jesus Christ, to make *his* God and Father the object of his highest affections, to confine his religious worship to Him alone, and by his love and worship and service, to do what in him lies, that GOD MAY IN ALL THINGS BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Intelligence.

UNITARIANISM IN GLASGOW.—Since the 1st of November about *ninety* new members have been added to the Unitarian Congregation, Glasgow, of whom *fifty two* are subscribers.

This is alarming to the Church-officers, who have, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the power of the *keys*, but who are afraid to lock out, and who cannot lock in. “To these officers,” (says the Confession, chap. xxx.) “the keys of the *kingdom of heaven* are committed ; by virtue whereof they have power respectively, to *retain* and *remit sins* ; to *shut* that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures ; and to *open* it to penitent sinners, by the ministry of the Gospel, and by *absolution* from censures, as occasion shall require.”

Correspondents.

Erasmus on Public Fasts, and D. on the word Grace, in our next.

We have received from the Author, “Remarks on the Proceedings of the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, relative to the Unitarian Marriage Question,” but the subject is one of little interest to our Readers.

Q. on Original Sin ; the Letter to the Theological Students of the Belfast Institution ; and some other articles, came too late for the present number.

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THE SYNOD'S ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES.

AT an early period in this session, a petition was presented to the House of Commons, praying them to address the King to appoint a day of National Fasting and Humiliation, but a motion to that effect was disposed of by the previous question, for the ostensible reason, that such a proposal should originate with the Crown, for which they have incurred the severe displeasure, and public reprehension of one of our Belfast preachers. It is probable, however, that the House was little inclined, while the public mind was in a state of excitement, to let loose all the fiery spirits, who could get possession of pulpits, to give vent to their factious principles and fanatical notions. They well knew, what confusion had been occasioned in former times by such indulgence. They had read of the triumphant progress of Sacheverel, marked by the prostration of meeting houses, of the anti-popery insurrection of Lord George Gordon threatening the Bank of England, and all the Government offices with destruction; and they might recollect the Birmingham riots, and the demolition of Dr. Priestley's house and library, museum and manuscripts.

The House of Commons were afraid to intrust their clergy, having no confidence, that when they "lifted up their voice like a trumpet, they would confine themselves to shewing the people their transgressions and sins;" but the Synod of Ulster, relying, no doubt, on the well-known temper and moderation of their members, determined after two months' consideration, to have a Fast of their own; and appointed the 13th of April for that purpose. There must certainly have been some urgent motive pressing upon the minds of

the Reverend Fathers, when they selected this day. Perhaps some disappointment in their transactions with Government may have soured their temper, when they sent forth this effusion of chagrin and discontent. But I rather suspect, that the popularity of the remonstrants, and their principles, provoked and alarmed them; for in their fifth reason they complain of the luke-warmness of their adherents. It must, surely, excite alarm in the minds of the inhabitants of this country, that in the middle of a late seed-time, while a large portion of the Island is threatened with famine, and when there is a general deficiency of labour to occupy the poor, they should be called upon to abandon the sowing of their corn, and the setting of their potatoes, to deprecate the divine displeasure, and thus aggravate the want of food and employment, from which they pray to be relieved. Nothing but the apprehension of divine vengeance, speedily to take place, can account for this unseasonable appointment. The annual meeting of Synod takes place in the last week of June. This is found to be the most convenient season for ministers to quit their farms; and surely, it must be equally so for the farmer and the labourer to suspend their operations.

This consideration must lead the public to fear, that some dire calamity is apprehended within the ensuing two months, and that the sins, which have provoked the Almighty, may be expiated within that period, either by penitence and prayer, or by a change in the conduct of Government, or some movement among their subjects. But, we find no ground for such apprehension or hope. We have seen no signs of impending wrath; and it is not possible, that *slavery*, and *superstition*, *profaneness*, and *heresy*, should all come to an end before the first of July. This reflection, again, tempts us to look else-where for the cause of this precipitancy. The intention must be to prepare the minds of men for something near at hand. The approaching events that engross the thoughts of men at present, are the reform bill and the general election. Perhaps the object of the Synod is to mould the minds of the people to their own model on these subjects. This conjecture receives strong confirmation from the intemperate declamation of the orator already alluded to,

against the first of those measures in general, and the regulations that seem to favour the catholic interest in particular. A day of general fasting and prayer is, no doubt, a powerful instrument in the hand of two hundred popular and enthusiastic preachers. Four hundred inflammatory harangues, and eight hundred agitating prayers will have a powerful effect; and will be greatly assisted by the conversation of ministers and elders, for a month before and after. But it would be very unjust and uncharitable, to impute such carnal motives to the Synod, in devising and proclaiming such a solemn and even awful ordinance. Let us, then, dismiss our conjectures, and look out for some more solid ground. This we shall find in their "*Address to the Churches.*"

It has been usual on such occasions as the present, to assign *causes* and *reasons* for calling on the people to join in these solemn services. During the last French War, they were annually announced by Royal authority; and such appointments are agreeable to the practice of the old Presbyterians in Scotland and Ireland, and of the Puritans in England. In both cases, they were always accompanied with a declaration of the sins and the calamities, which moved the rulers of the churches to these acts of pious mortification. But beside deploring the depravity of the times, and the misfortunes of the nation, there was generally some covert end to be answered. The church was in danger, and dissenters were gaining ground; or a war was unsuccessful, and the loyalty and patriotism of the people required to be roused, and their military ardour inflamed. Presbyterian proclamations or exhortations, are the preacher's briefs, compendiums of the topics, on which they are expected to enlarge.

The Synod of Ulster, like their Covenanting ancestors, abound with lugubrious and sanctimonious phraseology. In the first place, they encourage their ministers to take under their consideration the state of politics, foreign and domestic. "There is a general, and, as we conceive, a just impression in the churches, that upon such *perilous times*, ('foretold in scripture,') are we fallen. There is a shaking of the nations, and an overturning of thrones abroad, threatening again to involve Europe in all the horrors of war. There are difficulty and embarrassment in the public councils at home.

There are insubordination and outrage in districts hitherto peaceable; and there is a general and feverish anxiety amongst all classes, arising from an apprehension of some undefined and impending calamities." What a tocsin of alarm is here?—enough to unsettle the whole population of Ulster, and make "the hearts of men fail for fear, and for looking after those things, which are coming on the earth." It is safer that the populace should fix their hopes and speculations upon any one project, though dangerous, than to be thrown into a *feverish anxiety, about undefined and impending calamities*. If this agitation were confined to coffee-houses, and clubs of politicians, it would be digested and dissipated like other rumours. But here a whole Synod have turned alarmists and agitators. Here are two hundred preachers, each with his session of elders sent abroad, at this crisis, to ring an alarm, and spread consternation, and dangerous surmises through every cottage in the province.

" Silence, that dreadful Bell,
It frights the Isle from her propriety."*

They next remind the different classes of society of their sufferings, and causes of discontent, still cloaking their purpose in godly phrase. "The merchant, the mechanic, the husbandman, have all in their turn, felt the scourge of the public distress;" and then they exhort them "to look back at the times that *have been*, and look around them at the times *that are*;" and to contemplate "the increasing number of operatives, who, in vain, are seeking for employment, and the poor, who, with their families, are crying aloud for a morsel of bread."

The first of those sins, to which these calamities are to be ascribed, is Negro Slavery, which, we are told, has existed for 200 years. We know, that "the long suffering of the Lord should lead us to repentance;" but we are at a loss in applying this truth to the present case. The most abominable part of this system was the Slave-

* "At sæva e speculis tempus Dea nacta nocendi
Ardua petit tecta stabuli, et de culmine summo
Pastorale canit signum, cornuque recurvo,
Tartaream intendet vocem, qua protenus omne
Contremuit nemus, et silvæ intonuerunt profundæ."
"Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectora natos."

trade; but this has been abolished, and has no existence in the British Dominions. Nay, the Naval force, the treasure, and the lives of our countrymen, have been lavished, not only in putting an end to it by ourselves; but in checking this practice in foreign nations. As to the condition and treatment of slaves, there is no one object that has been prosecuted with so much zeal and perseverance, or prospect of success as the mitigation and abolition of Slavery, both by Government and subjects. When, therefore, I reflect upon the number of generations which persevered in this system, and upon the alternate changes of Prosperity and Adversity of these generations; and consider the remarkable manner in which these countries have been favoured in general; throughout this period, I cannot persuade myself that all the sins of those guilty generations of men are now visited upon us who are less culpable, and are labouring to put an end to the offences by which the land has been defiled; nor am I sensible that we are actually suffering any extraordinary distress, sufficient to indicate a Visitation of Providence, or to warrant the Synod in branding their flocks with the disgrace of being objects of Divine Judgments. I am even disposed to suspect, that some sinister design is concealed under a specious and deceitful outside. These observations may also be applied to the pretence about Official Oaths, especially as the correction of this abuse is also in progress, which form the next article in the Synodical Address.

Still following the example of their pious and zealous forefathers, they proceed to the state of Religion. It was the wish and hope of all good men, that the question of Catholic Emancipation might be buried in oblivion, after it became the law of the land. The three minor Presbyterian Bodies, in addressing the Lord Lieutenant, had regretted, that "the operation of that healing measure had met with any obstruction;" and his Excellency assured them, that the obstruction would be speedily removed. It is removed; and now the Synod of Ulster tear open the wounds that were healing, and widen the breaches that were nearly closed. They travel as far as Malta, the Ionian Isles and India, in quest of causes of discontent, at the permission of *Superstition and Idolatry*, by "men in high places." "Saints and Angels are still worshipped as Mediators; Images and

Pictures still receive the homage of the knee. Pilgrimages and penances are still substituted for the work of Christ; and we know, that the Bible, the holy word of a holy God, has been burned in the fire, buried in the earth, and otherwise sacrilegiously destroyed, in our Land; and the work of the Spirit of Order and Holiness publicly denounced as the Organ of Anarchy and Impurity." The next sentence, I suppose, glances at the Established Church. "Again, we discover the spirit of a mere human policy exercising an irresistible control over the order and offices of the Churches, and pursuing in these things, its own carnal and selfish ends, with a total disregard of the supremacy and glory of Christ." In this and other passages, they affect a carnal and sinful caution, to use a favourite expression of their own. They do not always like to disclose their whole meaning; but leave it to their individual members to expatiate more freely, as they know to be agreeable to the whole, or to some secret Divan.

With respect to their brethren of the Presbyterian Persuasion, they do not practise the same reserve. They designate them "*men professing to be Ministers of the Gospel*," just as the Episcopal Churches denominate themselves "*teachers in pretended holy orders*." Their great Leader in discoursing on this 4th Reason, insisted on the efficacy of Fasting in such a style, that he began to suspect his hearers would say, "This is Popery,"—"He did not care, there were many good things in Popery." Notwithstanding his declared hostility to the Romish Communion and to the Bill of Reform, he now pronounces it to be a true Church, holding all the essential Principles of the Gospel, though *encrusted* with some heterogeneous superfluities; and, at all events, a thousand times better than Arianism. He has even snatched the little horn of Daniel from the head of the Pope, and transferred it to the Remonstrants and their abettors; without specifying the Individual whose brow it was intended to grace. This omission, however, his hearers could easily supply. Their own disciples they rebuke for lukewarmness, thinking, forsooth, that they are relaxing the persecution of their brethren too soon. They are sufficiently particular in exposing the sins of the people, but altogether forgetful of their own. It would have well become them to re-

pent in sackcloth and ashes, of the internal distractions and animosities in their own Body for some years past. Had they then hearkened to some persuasive voice crying to them,—“The robe of Christ is without seam, woven from the top throughout: let us not rend it,”—they might have been restrained from this most ill-advised and ominous procedure, by the prudence and moderation of their now excluded Brethren.

On the whole, this Address seems to be a signal for a new system of Agitation. The first was extinguished by the Catholic Bill; the second has been abandoned by its author; and now, a third is to be organized under the patronage of the Synod of Ulster. Apprehending that their polemical partizans have not been sufficiently zealous and ardent; and knowing, that they had entirely failed in the Press, they now rely on the Pulpit. They send forth Apostles of Sedition and Persecution to deliver their inflammatory and bigotted harangues, from a place where they cannot be answered, to a populace who have no other means of information.

The Minute of Synod, by which this Address was adopted, calls for two or three remarks. The Church of Scotland have always held their Fasts on Thursday, avoiding Wednesday and Friday as polluted by Popery and Prelacy; and Government have usually issued separate Proclamations for Scotland, appointing that day. Our Synod, however, chose to dissent from their Mother Church, and symbolize with the Prelatical Communion, allowing an option to such as would rather attend Markets and Fairs on Wednesdays. It is also observable that they have accommodated themselves to these evil times, and departed from the rigor of their predecessors, confining the observance of the day to the ordinary duties of the Sabbath, without any mention of Fasting; as inconvenient, I suppose, to themselves, and not likely to be complied with by the People; not relishing, therefore, a solitary Fast, while every one around them was at dinner. The true, Orthodox routine of a Fast day, as prescribed in their Directory for Public Worship, by the Assembly of Divines, and adopted by the General Assembly of Scotland, consists in “total abstinence from all Food; from all worldly Labour, Discourses and Thoughts; all bodily delights, rich apparel, ornaments, and such like; and much more from gaudish

attire, lascivious habits and gestures, and other vanities of either sex, which Ministers are to reprove zealously without respect of persons." With this severity the public and private offices of Instruction and Devotion fully correspond.

Although this Address has a manifest tendency to aggravate that excitement, Religious and Political, which is at present at an alarming height, by fomenting general discontent, awakening dormant feuds, and stirring the smouldering embers of discord among Brethren; still would it be unfair to impute such designs to the whole Synod, or even to the Majority. But it certainly affords an additional reason why the moderate and well-disposed should no longer yield implicit faith and passive obedience to a few, who have usurped the dominion over their Body; and thus expose themselves and their Profession to blame and scorn throughout the United Kingdom, by submitting to their capricious humours, and tyrannical domination. How derogatory is it to the Dignity and Independence of the Synod, that about a score of Ministers, at an occasional Meeting, convened to prepare an Address to the Lord Lieutenant, should assume the authority of the whole, and risk the reputation of the Synod for prudence, peaceable conduct and loyalty, by such an absurd and dangerous measure. Many seem to have viewed this affair and the reasons assigned for it in the same light that I have done. The City and Presbytery of Derry, and no doubt many more, have treated the Invitation with silent contempt. The country Ministers, in general, have gone through the formality of an ordinary service to thin congregations, composed almost entirely of women. Even in Belfast, their most popular Preacher, the Coryphæus of the Synod, could not conceal his mortification, or refrain from venting his chagrin in the Pulpit, at the general indifference to his favourite measure. For these reasons, this portentous project has, I trust, passed over without any permanent consequences, like a summer cloud.

ERASMUS.

N. B.—Further Remarks on Public Fasts, must be deferred till next Month.

ON THE WORD GRACE.

THERE is perhaps no word in the New Testament which has been more perverted than the word *Grace*. The notion of it which some entertain leads them to spiritual pride, and encourages others in abandoned licentiousness, whilst some amiable and good men have been so disgusted by the perversion of it, as to object to the use of it altogether. As therefore it is of frequent occurrence in our received version of the Bible, it becomes our duty to try to ascertain its true meaning.

By the *Grace of God*, we may understand any considerable favour, any great blessing, which the Father of spirits in compassion for mankind, *freely* bestows upon them, i. e. of his own will, without any claim or desert on their part. This is a very general and extensive sense of the word; it is as extensive as our wants, and includes that great variety of instances in which the mercy of God inclines him to dignify or relieve us, whether by the gifts of nature, the bounties of providence, or the works of redemption. All we have proceeds from God, *by his grace we are what we are; in him we live, and move, and have our being*. But our thoughts upon this subject will be more clear, if, according to the New Testament, we understand by the word *Grace*, the means of salvation which the goodness of God bestows upon us; the influence which the use of those means should have upon our minds, or the happy effects of that influence appearing in our lives and conversation. Sometimes the Grace of God appears to signify in the New Testament the means of Salvation which the goodness of God bestows upon us. Hence the Gospel which is a declaration of God's merciful acceptance of sinners upon their repentance and faith in Christ is stiled in the Epistle to the Colossians, *the Grace of God*. Thus the apostle Peter speaks of the prophets prophesying of the *grace* that should come, evidently meaning the revelation of the gospel, and Paul put the question to the Romans, "*shall we continue in sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*"

As, for the confirmation of the Gospel, God was pleased to confer many extraordinary gifts of his Spirit on the first preachers of it, so we find these gifts also

called *grace*, as in these words to the Romans—"by whom we have received *grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith amongst all nations.*" *Grace* likewise signifies these peculiar supports afforded by the Spirit of God on other occasions, when he helps our infirmities and *works in us to will and do of his good pleasure*, as Paul, on his praying that some heavy affliction should depart from him, was assured *that God's grace would be sufficient for him.* In short all the means of religion, preaching, prayer, the ordinances of the gospel, are striking displays of divine favour, graciously appointed and calculated for the salvation of mankind.

Another sense of the word *Grace*, is the happy influence produced in our minds by the means above enumerated, or in other words, a principle of religion and piety reigning in our hearts. Thus the apostle, writing to the Hebrews, speaks of *the heart being established with Grace*; and as he calls the spirit of God, *the spirit of Grace*, so when he enumerates *faith, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, as fruits of the spirit*, it is evidently intended that these graces should be implanted in the heart; and when Peter exhorts christians *to grow in Grace*, he undoubtedly means that they should improve in all these virtuous and heavenly dispositions, which lead to form us into the image of God.

Grace may also be considered as implying the happy fruits and effects of this principle, appearing in the life. Thus we may understand the phrase *Barnabas saw the Grace of God.* There is no occasion for supposing that this alludes to any miraculous power of discerning what passed in the heart of others, with which Barnabas was gifted. It rather implies that he saw enough in their temper and lives to convince him that they were real christians, according to the rule of our BLESSED LORD, *by their fruits ye shall know them.* He saw much of the Grace of God appearing in the cheerfulness and joy with which he was himself received, and in the anxious desire they expressed of becoming *wise unto salvation*; in their open profession of faith in Christ, their love one to another, and the purity of their conduct. In this sense the apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesians—*let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying,*

that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And in this sense it is that he states the liberality of the Macedonian churches to the poor—the *grace of God bestowed upon them*; and exhorts them in the same style—*therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in love towards us, see that ye abound in this grace also, namely that of liberty towards the afflicted.*

Such appear to be the leading significations of the word *Grace* in the New Testament, but we must not pass unnoticed an influence which *grace* is sometimes understood to have, which seems not only inconsistent with the gospel, but of a very dangerous tendency; when the Grace of God is supposed to effect an instantaneous and as it were miraculous conversion, operating in an irresistible manner and independently of the person himself, whose powers are entirely and absolutely passive. Men are thus supposed utterly unable to do the will of God, so that if left to themselves, they could do nothing but sin, and must be under a necessity of aggravating their condemnation by every thought, word, and action of their lives. But if God act thus irresistibly, how comes our blessed Lord to tell the Jews that they had rejected the counsel of God against themselves? how come they to be charged with always resisting the Holy Ghost? and why are ministers cautioned against grieving and quenching the spirit of God? If the exercise of our own powers be quite unnecessary, and men in what is termed an *unregenerate* state, are perfectly *dead*, in such a sense as to be incapable of thinking upon spiritual things; then all the precepts and exhortations to repentance, all the promises and threatenings of the gospel, are of no use; then, to use the forcible words of the excellent archbishop Tillotson, “it would be every whit as proper and reasonable for us to preach in the church-yard amongst the graves of dead men, as in the church, to the unregenerate, because on this principle they can no more act and move towards their own recovery out of a state of sin and death, than the dead bodies can rise out of their graves.” By the *Grace of God* we were made reasonable beings, and he ever treats us as having a moral and spiritual nature. There is no violence offered to our reasoning powers, but the free use of them is required from us.

These powers are addressed by moral and religious motives, by reason and argument, by persuasion and conviction, by hopes and fears, and the Grace of God is designed to influence and sanctify us in the use of these motives. This seems agreeable to the apostle's account of it—*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* He does not say, work out your own salvation yourselves, as having no need of the assistance of the spirit of God, nor does he say on the contrary that the Grace of God works all in you in such sense that you need not do any thing yourselves, but ascribing to each part its proper office he says—*work out your own salvation,* because the Grace of God, the motives and assistances of the gospel, gives you the power to do so.

Let all those who take the name of christians endeavour to improve these inestimable favours they enjoy through the Grace of God, and make it manifest to all men by their conduct, that they are influenced by the principles and motives of the religion they profess, that thus when they are called on to leave this world, they may be able to rejoice in the hope of glory. D.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

Sir,—Anxious to support your valuable periodical, both from natural feeling, and an earnest desire of promoting the advance of pure and uncorrupted Christianity, it has occurred to me that occasional extracts from the works of our American brethren would be acceptable to many of your readers, particularly as I understand these talented supporters of our cause, are not as generally known in our Island as they ought to be. The following paper is extracted from the “Unitarian Advocate,” (September, 1829,) published monthly in Boston, and contains a beautiful elucidation of a difficult and much disputed text. The form is altered from the original, but not the matter, and its insertion in the Bible Christian, will oblige, sir, your constant reader,

A UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN.

SPIRITS IN PRISON.

FROM THE UNITARIAN ADVOCATE, FOR SEPTEMBER, 1829.

IN the first epistle of Peter, iii. 19, is a remarkable assertion which has occasioned much difficulty and disputation, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison." Peter mentions in the closest connexion the following circumstances:—"The death and resurrection of Christ, his going to preach to imprisoned spirits, the depravity and disobedience of the antediluvian world, and the long suffering of God while Noah was preparing the ark. In thus presenting in the same sentence, circumstances apparently so foreign to one another, there is something extremely peculiar. It looks unconnected and independent, and renders the passage almost unintelligible, so that many have formed the wildest misconceptions of the apostle's meaning. Some have entertained an idea that between the crucifixion and resurrection of the Saviour, he descended into hell, to proclaim to the wicked the glad tidings of deliverance; while others have imagined, that he went to paradise, and preached the gospel to the departed spirits of the good. Both these opinions I conceive to be erroneous, both entirely unsupported by this or any other portion of Scripture, and nothing could have been more remote, I conceive, from the writer's imagination.

Let us for a moment, remember the characters to whom Peter addresses this epistle, and the circumstances of their salvation. To foreign Jews and Gentiles, who had been converted to the Christian faith. He calls them strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bethynia; whom he seems to consider in their state of separation, or dispersion among the heathen, as resembling Noah and his family among the antediluvians; and it is not improbable, that their situation suggested an illusion apparently so remote, and gave it pertinency and force.

There is also another point of resemblance between the old world, and the world at the time of the apostle's writing. While Noah was preaching repentance and reformation, and preparing an ark of safety, a fearful visitation was every moment impending; a visitation

that was to overwhelm mankind with universal destruction. In a similar manner, when Peter was writing to his converts scattered through various countries, at that very period, the tremendous day of visitation, foretold by the Messiah, was coming upon Jerusalem; a visitation that within six or seven years, was not only to annihilate the Jewish polity, but to affect the lives, the fortunes, and properties of surrounding nations. It was the visitation of war, pestilence, and famine; awful appearances in the sky, a convulsion of empires, the terror, the bloodshed, the sweeping desolation of the city of God. When Christ was predicting the destruction impending over the metropolis, the government and glory of his native land, he compares it to the flood overwhelming the myriads of the old world. Peter therefore seems to have borrowed this image from his master, and this fact, with the view of the characters addressed, their situation and circumstances, to which allusion was made just now, will aid us in developing the apostle's association, train of thought, object, and aim.

Having observed that it was better, when the will of God so required, to suffer for well-doing than for evil doing, he adduces the Saviour as an example. For "even Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit." That is, having been crucified, he was raised from the dead by his Father. *The spirit* evidently means *supernatural power*; and *quickened by the spirit*, by consequence implies, *restored to life by the miraculous agency of Heaven*, by God himself. *By which*, that is, by the *same spirit*, the *same divine agency*, which received him after crucifixion; by this supernatural power he went and preached to the spirits in prison. By an idiomatic form of expression, *he went and preached*, is precisely the same as *he preached*; or the original may be rendered, *he preached after his departure*. The apostle by no means alludes to the Saviour's preaching *in person* after his mission was completed, and confirmed by his submission to death. He is said to *preach* after his departure, just as he *baptised* during his life. Now it is well known that our Saviour never baptised in his own person. St. Paul also says of Christ to the Ephesians, ii. 7,—“He came and preach-

ed peace to you," which He never did himself in person, but by his apostles.

With respect to the word *spirits*, the whole obscurity of this term is confined to the English reader. All who have made the Hebrew language familiar, remember, that the Greek of the New Testament exhibits much of the Hebrew idiom; they remember that the original word is often employed for *men, persons, human beings*. In the very next verse *soul* is employed in the same manner; eight souls or persons were preserved by water. The clause might be rendered—He preached to the *minds* of men in *prison*. This is Wakefield's version. On this very term the prophet Isaiah has shed the clearest light:—"Thus saith the Lord, He that created the Heavens, and stretched them out, I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the *prisoners from the prison*, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." David too exclaims—"Bring my soul out of prison." Indeed to give deliverance to the captive, and to free from their bonds those who are bound, are among our commonest figures of speech, or metaphorical expressions, to mark the escape from calamity, ignorance, immorality and vice. The apostles were commissioned, the ministers of the Messiah are still commissioned to preach deliverance to men imprisoned by sin, led captive by iniquity, confined and oppressed by the fetters of evil habit.

The preaching of Noah, and the preaching of Christ, were blended together in the minds of the apostle. This blending produces at first a little confusion, until his purpose is ascertained and reflected upon, the meaning of the apostle is simply this—that the preachers of the gospel, from the first, addressed, and continue to address, at the present period, individuals *resembling* the antediluvians; men of *similar* disobedience, indifference and vice, characters of the same unrenewed heart, the same unreformed behaviour.

Thus I have endeavoured to unfold the situation and circumstances of certain primitive Christians, those scattered Christians, to whom Peter in the year sixty-three or sixty-four of the Christian era, communicated this epistle. With all the clearness and accuracy in my

power, I have endeavoured to develope the exact import of the phrase "*going and preaching to the spirits in prison.*" My views of it are briefly these ; not that, after his departure, during those thirty-six hours that intervened between our Saviour's death and resurrection, not that he descended into the regions of darkness, to proclaim to the wicked the glad tidings of deliverance ; not that he ascended to paradise to preach the gospel to the departed spirits of the good ; not indeed that he preached *any where in his own proper person.* The persons who preached were his apostles and ministers ; and the "*spirits in prison*" whom he addressed were *depraved characters* ; not spirits of the departed either in heaven or in hell ; not the contemporaries of Noah ; they were individuals of *similar* disobedience, indifference, and vice, of the same unbelieving spirit, and refractory disposition.

Was Christ crucified and committed to the tomb ? Was he raised by the mighty power of God ? Did he accompany the preaching of his gospel with the same miraculous energy that raised him from the dead ? Did he indeed, as was predicted of him, open the blind eyes ? Did he indeed, bring out prisoners from prison, and captive sinners groping in darkness, from the prison house ? Did he commission his apostles, his ambassadors, to purpose overtures of salvation to characters as insensible, unbelieving, and rebellious, as the contemporaries of Noah ? You see the arm of the Lord stretched forth to save you. Need I say, that whenever "*spirits in prison*" are discoverable, the ministers of the gospel are to preach to them the means of enlargement and liberty ; preach to them to escape from the dominion of darkness, and come forth to the freedom and glorious light of the sons of God, and heirs of immortality—come forth to an "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, unfading," reserved in heaven for all who are prepared to receive its glory.

EREUNETES IN REPLY TO AN "ENQUIRER," CONCERNING THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

To dispatch minor matters first, "An Enquirer" objects to the appellation Socinian being applied to the

believers in the mere or strict humanity of Christ, as it is called, because Socinus taught that divine worship should be paid to Christ, "a doctrine abhorrent to Humanitarians, and in his opinion, in direct opposition to Christ's commands." Freunetes replies to this simply, that in using that word, he has not the most distant intention of giving offence to a religious body, whom he highly values for integrity, and manly uprightness of character; for practical piety and zeal for what they believe to be the truth; for great assiduity in the study of the sacred volume, and fearlessly following out the truths which they think they find there. He uses the word Socinians, because it is a word more generally understood, and understood precisely in the sense of Humanitarian, without any reference to the opinion that worship should be addressed to Christ.

Ereunetes may not give as explicit an answer as An Enquirer would wish, to the objection against the pre-existent scheme from prophecy, because he is not sure that he understands it, as he feels no difficulty in the matter himself. He cannot enter into the difficulty that some feel from Jesus being called a Man, either in prophecy or history, for he knows not what else he could possibly be called. Supposing the pre-existent scheme to be true, Jesus Christ must still be called a Man; therefore it is no proof against that scheme that he is so called. He had the external appearance of a man—was touched with a feeling of the infirmities of human nature—was tempted like as we are. He was destitute of nothing essential to constitute a human being. He was on the pre-existent hypothesis *more* than a man. So was he on the Humanitarian scheme. The difference between us is, that we think him to have had this superiority essentially; the Humanitarians consider it as belonging to him accidentally; but this word, it must be explained, is used in a scholastic sense, to mean qualities superadded to what is essential. They consider him to be a man blessed with such a portion of divine favour and gifts as were never before bestowed on man; and if this superiority, at that time imparted, does not prevent him from being properly called a man, we do not see any greater difficulty when we consider the same gifts and powers as belonging to himself; not, most certainly, in an underived manner, but bestowed

upon him by his Father, prior to his existence upon earth. Ereunetes thinks that there is much light thrown upon the prophecies by the pre-existent scheme, but he is not of opinion that any doctrinal view can be *proved* by prophecy, although it may occasionally be corroborated. A sufficient reason for this is the necessary obscurity of prophecy as to minute particulars, unless the prophet were to enter so minutely into detail as to enable an impostor to fulfil the terms of the prophecy, and deceive the people. Another reason is connected with that difficult question of the double sense of prophecy, and the distinction between passages prophetic, and those merely accommodated from similarity.

If he be asked, why is not the Pre-existence of Christ more expressly laid down? he would answer, that it is not an *essential* doctrine of Christianity; because all that is essential is comprised in having a firm belief in all the power that Jesus claimed, and in all the authority that is ascribed to him; in the terms of pardon that he proclaimed and the offers of mercy that he held out; in his dominion over his church, and his being ordained of God to judge the world in righteousness, and give Eternal Life to whom he will. He sees, on the hypothesis of Christ being with the Father before the word was, many ways in which the gospel scheme hangs better together, in which there is a more beautiful adaptation of the means to the end; and, more than this, he feels that many passages of Scripture admit of a consistent and natural interpretation, which require much unnatural compression to bring them within the narrow limits of Humanitarianism.

As to the "question how, if a supernatural being, Christ's conduct in life can be any example to human beings?" it is as much affected by one view of the Christian Doctrine as by another; and in the opinion of Ereunetes, it is not materially affected by any. If the Almighty himself can be proposed as our example that we are to imitate in mercifulness and perfection, there can be no difficulty in seeing how his Son may be as correctly proposed, whether he consider him in the Trinitarian, Arian, or Socinian point of view. Nor have the Humanitarians the advantage that they flatter themselves with having. For if Christ had supernatural gifts, and miraculous assistance to sustain him in his

arduous trials, he cannot be an example to a man without those gifts and helps, more than if he were a being of superior order and higher faculties he could be an example to one possessed of ordinary faculties and powers. There is no difficulty whatever in seeing how a perfect example may be an object of imitation to a being who can never attain to its perfection. We can without any difficulty understand that, although we cannot exhibit as perfect an obedience to God's will, as Christ did, we are yet to imitate him in that obedience as far as possible, and it matters not whether that perfection of obedience be put out of our reach by his participation of a larger portion of spiritual aid from God, by having in his own nature higher spiritual capacities, or by being partaker of the Essence of Deity. As an object of imitation, there is but little difference in the various views of the nature of Christ ; but there is much when we consider him as an object of gratitude, and we look upon it as admitting of little doubt, that, on the supposition of Christ entering upon the whole of his scene of trials voluntarily, and with a full foreknowledge of them before his sojourning among men, we feel that we owe him much more than on the supposition that he had no choice in becoming the Christ, and that the only deliberation of which he was capable, was whether he would abandon the post assigned him or not. We also consider that this supposition accounts more satisfactorily for the high rank which Christ now holds, sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on High, having a name above every name, at which every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth, so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—We think these things very hard to be accounted for on the Humanitarian Scheme ; but this is no reason for judging our brethren in these matters, nor for being so arrogant as to say that, because we cannot see how these things can be reconciled, no one else can. Exclusion is the great aim of most Christian Sects. As large a comprehension as possible, without confounding by too much generality, should be the principle of our denomination. “ Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.” “ Let us not, therefore, judge one another.” “ Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

“The Kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost : for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”

“Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

“Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.”



BELIEF IN THE TRINITY, INCOMPATIBLE WITH BELIEF IN THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE.



IN the Number of the *Bible Christian* for October, I called upon all Trinitarians to show by what authority they teach, that Christ delivered part of the Gospel as God, and part of it as Man; and also to state how much credit was due to each of the supposed divisions respectively. I was aware that this had been done before, but I had never seen the challenge expressed in such pointed and explicit terms. Before following up the matter any farther, I have purposely waited a considerable time, that they might have an opportunity of maturely studying the subject, and of searching for their proofs, if such were to be found. But it is all in vain—not a syllable is to be found on the subject in the accredited organ of the party; and since the challenge has been before the public upwards of six months, without being noticed, it is fair to infer that no such authority can be produced. This being the case—and Trinitarians by their silence acquiesce in the verdict—it follows that the whole system is a gratuitous assumption—a pure invention of weak-minded men to favour their own views, at the expense of Scripture and reason. If then, this part of their creed be overthrown, the doctrine of the Trinity falls at once to the ground, for without this subterfuge it cannot stand a moment.

Even Trinitarians admit, in words, that God is at all times possessed of unbounded knowledge, and unlimited power. Now suppose he had appeared on earth in the person of Jesus Christ, is it possible that his doing so could have deprived him of these attributes? I do think it is impossible for the human mind to conceive that any thing could divest him of any attribute which he ever possessed; and yet, if we believe in the Trinity, or

rather if we believe that Christ is God—for this is the grand point generally attempted to be established—we must believe that this happened, or else discard a large part of the Scriptures altogether; for Christ expressly declares that he is neither omniscient nor omnipotent—the first respecting the day of judgment, Matt. xxiv. 36, Mark xiii. 32; the last when he states that it is not his to grant the privilege of sitting on his right hand and on his left, Matt. xx 23. How wretched must that system of religion be, which cannot exist otherwise than by representing its Divine Founder as having stated what, in another form, even those who believe in it admit, could not possibly be true! “He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John iii. 36. It is not enough for Trinitarians to assert, that Christ spoke certain passages in his human nature. I will not let them off so cheaply. I ask them calmly and seriously, were the words which he is thus said to have uttered, true, or were they false? Did he, or did he not possess the powers which he disclaimed? I press these important questions home to the heart of every candid, conscientious Trinitarian; and let them be answered fairly and without equivocation. My view of the matter is, that Trinitarians must reject every passage of Scripture in which it is stated that the Son is subordinate to the Father; for I cannot conceive of what value any text can possibly be, if the truth of it is denied. In my former communication, I gave one text which Trinitarians must disbelieve, and I now proceed to give a few others, which as they come under the same denomination, must be treated in the same manner:

“All things are *delivered* unto me of my *Father*.” Matt. xi. 27. “To sit on my right and on my left, is *not mine to give*; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” xx. 23. “All power is *given* unto me in Heaven and in Earth,” xxviii. 18. “Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth, not me, but him that sent me.” Mark, ix. 37. “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my *Father* hath *appointed* unto me.” Luke, xxii. 29. “The Son can do *nothing* of himself.” “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” “I can of mine

own self do nothing." "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." John, v. 19, 22, 30, 36. "I came down from Heaven, *not to do mine own will*, but the will of him that sent me." vi. 38. "My doctrine *is not mine*, but his that sent me." vi. 38. "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he *sent me*." viii. 42. "My Father which gave them, is greater than all." x. 29. "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me; he *gave me a commandment* what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." xii. 49, 50. "The word which ye hear *is not mine*, but the Father's which sent me." xiv. 24.

I will not give a single quotation from the 17th chapter, for if I give any I might transcribe it all. I do not see how a Trinitarian can believe one word of it; though if anything could add weight to the sentiments which it contains, and entitle them to credence, it would be this fact, that the whole of it is a prayer addressed by Christ to his Heavenly Father, rather than a discourse directed to his followers.

"Jesus saith unto her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* Father and your Father, and to *my* God and your God.' " xx. 17. Such is a specimen, and a very small one, of the passages of Scripture which Trinitarians must necessarily disbelieve. It is absolutely necessary that they should have this latter text blotted out, for it stands so much in their way that even the subterfuge of the human nature cannot be applied to it, as it was delivered by Christ after his resurrection. I believe John is generally accounted sufficiently orthodox, yet a large part of his writings must be disbelieved by Trinitarians; for in his Gospel I find Christ stating expressly, thirty-six times that *his Father had sent him*, besides a great many other expressions which convey exactly the same meaning. It would be easy to give these passages or references to them, as well as several hundreds of others of the same import from different parts of the New Testament; but as many of them have already appeared in the *Bible*

Christian, I do not think it necessary to add any more of this nature, to prove the principle for which I contend. It may suffice to refer to the passages given in a series of articles entitled "Scripture its own Interpreter," all which and others, must be entirely got rid of, if we believe in the Trinitarian scheme.

I have hitherto confined myself to the words of our Lord himself, but I have now to direct the attention of the reader to a few texts of a different kind. I allude to the account which is given of the circumstances attendant upon two striking events in the life of Christ—his baptism and transfiguration. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo! the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved *son* in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 16, 17. Mark gives the words, "Thou art my beloved *son* in whom I am well pleased." i. 2; and Luke, "Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased." iii. 22. At his transfiguration the same expression was used. "Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, "This is my beloved *son* in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Matt. xvii. 5. "This is my beloved *son*, hear him." Mark ix. 7; and Luke ix. 35, uses exactly the same words as Mark.

Now I do conceive that if there be meaning in language, the above texts are conclusive in proving, that the most marked distinction exists between the Father and the Son; as well as the subordination of the latter to the former. Certainly the invisible Being who in the one instance, is said to have spoken from Heaven, and in the other out of a cloud, could not be the same who at the very same instant was visible on earth in the form of a man. In any other case there is no difficulty in comprehending the relative situation in which a Father and a Son must necessarily stand towards each other; and here, be it observed, there can be no quibbling, no evasion, no pretence about a human nature. The Son, in a great many instances, declares his subordination to the Father; but *he* is not believed—*his* evidence is not sufficient. Will Trinitarians reject the testimony of the Father also? I see no way by which they can set aside

this plain matter-of-fact kind of reasoning, but by discarding the above passages of Scripture entirely, in addition to those delivered by the Son.

It is a happy circumstance that all men are not so prone to take liberties with the Scriptures, as divines. If men were as ready to set aside the parts which apply to their moral conduct, as they are to tamper with what relates to doctrine, the most sublime views of the Gospel would soon have very little effect in restraining them from the commission of the most flagrant crimes. If the system which I am now endeavouring to combat, were fully acted upon, it would go far to destroy the effect of every precept contained in the Gospel; for if we ever admit the monstrous supposition that part of it is not to be believed, and cannot tell how much,—where are we to stop? Is it not granting a liberty to every one to reject as much as he pleases? I cannot imagine a more awkward situation than that in which a Trinitarian Minister might be placed while reproving a sinner for his wickedness, if the culprit possessed sufficient address to turn the tables upon his accuser. Suppose the Minister were to point out the evil consequences which would inevitably follow from a course of sin, and to quote, in proof of a future state of rewards and punishments, the following text from Matt. xxv. 46. “And these (the wicked,) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Suppose the criminal were to reply as follows: “Sir, you believe in the Trinity; yet I find in the New Testament a place where Christ says, ‘My father is greater than I.’ John, xiv. 28. You say he delivered this passage in his human nature, yet you cannot point out a single instance of his making this distinction. Nevertheless you take the liberty to set his express declaration completely aside, and to teach, in direct opposition to it, that he is equal with the Father—nay, farther, that he is himself the Supreme God, the Almighty Father of all. It suits your views to deny the truth of the above text. Now, I have as good authority for rejecting that which you have quoted, and for saying, that Christ delivered *it* merely as a man, and that therefore, it does not deserve the slightest attention. You, sir, are a Minister of the Gospel, and are in the habit of teaching people what they should believe as well as what they ought to do; and by your man-

ner of explaining the contents of the Bible, you have taught me a rule, which renders of no effect any passage in it which condemns the indulgence of my passions and appetites ; nor need you be surprised that I should thus profit by your example. I admit I have committed the acts with which you charge me ; but you can produce no better proof that I will be made accountable for my actions in another world, than that which, on another point, you, and all who believe as you do, broadly and distinctly deny to be any proof whatever.”—I can feel for a virtuous, well-disposed Minister, placed in such a distressing situation. He wishes to do good, but is unable. He feels it to be his duty, as it is his desire, to dissuade from a vicious course of life, by pointing out the evil-consequences attendant upon it ; but he is struck dumb by the simple fact of another man taking the same liberties with the Scriptures which he does himself. I must repeat—happy is it that this system is not fully acted upon ! Let Trinitarians make out as strong a case against Unitarians as I have here established against them, if they can ; and till then, let us hear no more about Unitarianism leading to infidelity. If they think I have dealt hardly with them, or that I have placed the matter in too strong a light, let them reflect that I have only gone upon their own grounds. If their system has sustained a wound, let them reflect that they have themselves lent the weapon with which it was inflicted. I cannot help regretting, however, that the subject has not been taken up by an abler hand, for I feel that I have been far from able to do it justice.

Since writing the above, I have seen, in the “ Orthodox Presbyterian” for February, a laboured article on the ubiquity of Christ, signed a Member of the Established Church. I am neither disposed nor qualified to enter at length into the consideration of this subject, but the line of argument adopted by this writer is so extraordinary, that I think some of his positions are deserving of a passing notice. To any one who has not seen the article, it would be impossible to give an adequate idea of its merits, without giving more extracts than it might be found convenient to insert in the Bible Christian ; but I will endeavour to give a brief analysis of the arguments it contains. The whole drift of this writer’s reasoning, if such it can be called, is to

show, that the most marked distinction exists between God and Christ, and by this means to prove that they are both one. He commences with proving from John i. 18, what I believe no Unitarian will deny, that no man hath seen God at any time; and that consequently, the Being who appeared to, and conversed with Abraham, Moses, and others, could not have been God, and must therefore have been Christ. Having first established a distinction between them, which might satisfy any Unitarian, he next proceeds to prove apparently to his own satisfaction, from the names given to this Being, and the honours paid him, that he could be no other than the Almighty himself; and thus does every thing in his power to overturn what he had formerly advanced—to deny what he had formerly asserted—to pull down with the one hand what he had just raised with the other. It has been observed that in some instances *two* negatives prove a positive; but this writer makes *one* serve his purpose. With him, in order to prove that two are one, it is only necessary to prove that they are two, and the matter is finished at once. Oh most rare discovery! that union and division are to be proved by the same means. This Member of the Established Church seems to be so well satisfied with his own plan of reasoning as to forget that other people will see how weak and contradictory it is. This reminds me of the bird, which, when its head is covered, fondly imagines its whole body is concealed.

In page 164, the writer quotes from John i, 3. “ ‘ All things were made by him, (the Word) and without him was not any thing made that was made.’ And St. Paul informs us that by him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible.” From this he infers that if Christ be not God, he must have created himself; but while he endeavours to stamp upon Unitarians this monstrous absurdity, he falls into the equal absurdity of making God the author of his own being; for his method of applying the word *all* would include the Father as well as the Son; and if he claims an exception for the one, those who think differently from him have as good a right to do so for the other.

There are a number of other passages in the article equally worthy of attention, but I shall confine myself to one further extract. After having stated p. 165, that

the Father is the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*, he proceeds—"Christ is *JEHOVAH visible*. He it was who claimed the appellation I Am. 'I Am hath sent me unto you,' Ex. iii. 16. And again, in the New Testament, he uses the same term—"Before Abraham was, I am;" thus claiming an existence commensurate in duration with eternity itself." From this we learn that the Being *sent*, claims the appellation of him who sent him, when he tells who it was by whom he was sent; and also, that in order to prove eternal existence, it is only necessary to trace back that existence till before the birth of Abraham, which period of time this writer considers as synonymous with "eternity itself." In this manner it might be proved that Adam, Cain, and all who lived before Abraham, existed from eternity.

AN ELDER'S SON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ON RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

Sir,—From the superior importance attached to religious opinions, and the comparative indifference to the practice of virtue and moral duties, manifested by the clergy, who by way of eminence style themselves Orthodox, one might be led to suppose that Christianity consisted merely in a set of *opinions*, and that the mission of our Saviour was designed solely to regulate men's *belief*. In conformity with this supposition, all churches who have assumed to themselves the title of orthodox, have prepared opinions for regulating the belief of the faithful; and those who reject their manufactured articles are lopped off as rotten branches, and declared to be fit fuel for unquenchable fire. It is to be noted, however, that their anxiety extends little farther than to the persons who are candidates for, or in the receipt of temporal emoluments; and that the loaves and fishes only are to be guarded with more than ordinary care against falling into the sacrilegious hands of heretics. The most wicked biped, however heretical his opinions, if he pay well, is still a good son of the church: but "the case is altered quite" if he be a can-

didate for any of its emoluments—no matter how pure his life, or irreproachable his character—the smallest discrepancy in his opinions would be sufficient to bring upon his devoted head all its anathemas. If instances were necessary to prove this fact, many could be given; but the late conduct of the Synod of Ulster, in refusing to allow the signature of their moderator to certify for the successors of remonstrant ministers, in the same manner as for the Presbytery of Antrim, may suffice.

The reader who has carefully perused the articles, formularies, and confessions of the various churches, must have been struck with the difference between these criterions of Orthodoxy, and the Gospel of Christ. In the former, the greatest stress is uniformly laid on faith or belief; in the latter upon actions and conduct. The language of Christ is, “not every one that saith Lord, Lord unto me, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.” And an apostle has said, that “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

The heterogeneous anomaly, which the opinions of Christians present to the philosophic observer, at the present day, seem wholly irreconcilable with the progress of improvement in arts, philosophy, and politics. This is the more extraordinary, as all pretend to draw their opinions from the same source. I can account for this phenomenon on no other principle, than that of worldly policy, which makes it the interest of individuals to pervert Christianity from motives of a secular nature. On no other subject than religion, are men led to reject the use of reason from mere authority; nor are the minds of youth so warped, by early prejudice, and the preconceived opinions of parents and teachers, as to imbibe principles merely speculative, not recommended by experience, or demonstrated by such reasoning as in other matters, is deemed necessary to command the assent of rational beings.

In all our researches, where truth is the only object of enquiry, mankind have arrived at a uniformity of opinion, wholly unattainable, while they continued to oppose to each other theoretic systems of sects, unsupported by reason, experience, and demonstration.

Were religious inquiries undertaken with the same view—the discovery of truth—and not for the purpose of supporting systems and sects, we might reasonably expect that the same uniformity (so far as uniformity is desirable,) would prevail on religious subjects, as exists among mankind on morals, philosophy, and science. But ere this consummation can be attained, there must be a revision, and a repeal of those temporal laws, which concur with the interests of the clergy in prescribing dogmas on speculative doctrines, by which pains and penalties are inflicted upon such as refuse compliance to established modes of faith. Most societies and sects, consider themselves competent to enforce articles of faith, to bind the consciences of their brethren; and whoever refuses to comply, or to yield submission to their assumed authority, are objects of persecution, and deemed unworthy of church fellowship, however moral in their lives, or exemplary in their conduct. Thus religion, which was designed to be a bond of love and union among mankind, is perverted to the purposes of hatred and discord.

With regard to the formation of religious opinions, it is more than probable, that the impious assumption of fallible men to coerce their brethren into a belief of particular dogmas, has contributed more than any other circumstance, to produce a diversity in religious sentiments. Where the power is possessed, and exercised, of punishing individuals who dissent from the established faith; and of suppressing the publication of opinions opposed to it, there will be an acquiescence, and a *seeming* uniformity; but this will continue only so long as the cause which produced it continues to operate. These observations are borne out by the state of Europe prior to the Reformation; and by the present state of Spain. In Britain, though the profession and publication of religious opinions are free to every individual, yet the monopoly of secular emoluments, acts as a premium, in retaining men of worldly minds in the profession of established forms, how widely soever their real sentiments may differ from them. Thus, there exists the strongest temptation to induce men to become hypocrites, and to connive at hypocrisy in others; by which means, religion itself is regarded as an engine of state, to frighten the vulgar into submission, and to

contribute to the luxury of a few, who are themselves too wise to be affected by its terrors. In this manner, all established churches which exclude from emoluments such persons as do not profess their creeds, and opinions, have operated, and will operate in producing hypocrisy among the clergy, whether they be Episcopalian or Presbyterian. We do not assert that all the clergy, who belong to churches that have exclusive creeds and forms, are hypocrites; but we do assert that the tendency of such establishments, is to produce hypocrisy; and that all who partake of their emoluments, must, in some degree, be subject to suspicion.

There is one circumstance connected with established forms of opinions, which operates most mischievously upon the societies among whom they are established; viz.—Should the opinions be erroneous, then the establishment is a corporation for the propagation of error. If only part of them be erroneous, then, so far as these are concerned, error is still propagated. If it be asserted that they are not erroneous, but true, this is either assuming infallibility, or begging the question; if the former, where is the warrant for such assumption? If the latter, why impose upon mankind opinions as true, for which no proof can be adduced? But, even, granting the opinions to be true, where is the warrant or authority for imposing them on mankind; or for excluding from privileges and emoluments, such as refuse to recognize them? Or why bestow emoluments on those who profess to believe, though in reality, they may be the veriest sceptics? Here is the opening for hypocrites, while the conscientious are excluded.

From the foregoing observations, and from the clearest dictates of justice, reason and experience, as well as from the whole tenor of scripture, we are warranted in concluding, that the true and legitimate system for producing a uniformity of religious opinions among mankind, is, to leave them as free and unrestrained, as they are in science, arts and philosophy. Had theories and opinions in philosophy, physical and abstract science, been imposed by legislative sanctions, similar to those which have been imposed upon the Christian religion for the last twelve centuries, what would have been the state of knowledge among mankind? Would we not yet have been involved in the grossest darkness

of mental ignorance? Are not mankind advanced in religious knowledge, and moral rectitude, in the proportion in which religious liberty is enjoyed? The present state of the countries in which Christianity is professed, answers directly in the affirmative.

Why not, then, remove every restriction? The worldly interests of hypocritical priests, and interested statesmen will not allow it. If truth and knowledge prevailed, priestly authority would cease. The terrors of clerical execrations would no longer have the power of loosing the purse-strings of the laity. "Othello's occupation would be gone."

I would then say to my lay brethren, let the clergy continue to follow their dishonest tricks, but, "be ye not partakers in their evil deeds." Proceed in your examination of religious matters, as in any science, where truth and utility are your only objects. Reject every dogma for which you have not sufficient evidence. Carefully investigate every proposition, taking nothing for granted *which has not been sufficiently established by evidence*. When you have discovered truth, value it above all price. Though it may overthrow your preconceived notions, it cannot lead you astray. Let it be brought into action on every practical occasion, in the same manner as abstract science is applied to the useful and mechanic arts. If you thus proceed, you need not fear the anathemas of a worldly-minded clergy; and you will in a short time render them what they should be—the promoters of peace and good-will among men, instead of being the firebrands and the scourges of society.

A LAYMAN.

ORIGINAL SIN.

AMONG the many foul charges brought against us, Unitarians, there are two that discover a singular talent for tortuosity in their inventors.

The first charge is, that we weigh Scripture against Scripture, and array one host of texts against another, in order to expose the contradictions thereof. And on what, think you, is this charge founded? Why, on our comparing in order to *reconcile* texts that at first

sight *seem* to differ from each other, and to demonstrate the perfect harmony of the Scriptures, in their *spirit*, notwithstanding the apparent differences in the *letter*. Now surely such a misrepresentation of our conduct, and of our *motives* cannot flow from that charity that thinketh no evil, that is, that ascribes our neighbour's conduct to as good motives as it will bear; that charity that rejoiceth in the truth; that is kind, and tender-hearted, and judgeth not another's servant.

The other charge brought against us, is, that we set up our own reason against the Scriptures, which is the very reverse of what we profess, when we call ourselves Bible Christians. We set up reason, say they, against Revelation, and uniformly prefer reason to Scripture? And on what is this second charge founded? On our searching the Scriptures daily, and after serious inquiry, and prayer for divine aid, daring to differ from them in THEIR VIEW of the Scriptures, and to judge of ourselves what is right, by our reason, which is as much the gift of God as Revelation. But not only is this charge groundless, it is senseless and absurd. For the Scriptures are the *materials* which we are to work up into the various articles of furniture for the human mind, and reason is the *instrument*, by means of which we are to work up these materials; and so necessary an instrument that we require reason to reject reason. Now, it is as absurd to compare and prefer reason to Scripture, or Scripture to reason, as it is to prefer the instrument to the materials, or the materials to the instrument. I request the reader to peruse the last two plain sentences a second time, as I have not time to enlarge upon this New-light view of the matter. For we must own, however reluctantly, that it is only by reason clearly exercised, and by Divine aid duly asked and received, that we can judge of the Scriptures, or be fellow-workers with God in the great work of human salvation. And let it not be said, that we arrogate too much to ourselves, when we speak of working out our own salvation, since we acknowledge that we derive all from God, and ascribe our powers, our exertions, and the *success* of all our exertions, to "Him who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure."

Those that desire to give a reason for the hope that is in them, must have seen, in many instances, the abso-

lute necessity for comparing and reconciling Scripture with Scripture, and the word of God with the known attributes of God.

A strong proof of the absolute necessity of this, we find in the second commandment, and in the 18th Chapter of Ezekiel. At the 20th verse of the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, also Deut. 24, and 16, we are told, that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father;" and this opinion we know to be congenial with the general tenor of the Scriptures, and with the known attributes of God, his justice and mercy. But in the second commandment, God is said "to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children;" which seems to run counter to the above, to the known attributes of God, and to the general tenor of the Scriptures.

Now, in order to reconcile these two apparently contradictory texts, allow me to observe, that children generally adopt the religious opinions of their parents, frequently without considering whether they are reasonable or not. And idolatry or image-worship, which is the vice especially forbidden in this commandment, being the evil or sin most commonly handed down from father to son, is, *for this reason*, so often denounced in the Scriptures as perpetuating error and sin. Another reason for denouncing it is, that worshipping the work of our own hands argues as great a degree of derangement, being founded upon the absurd, self-contradictory opinion, that *we could make* the Being that *made us*. Another reason for denouncing idolatry is, that it roots up all *accountableness*, (for how could we be accountable to dead matter, stocks and stones, fashioned by our own hands,) and it gives an unbounded licence to fornication, luxury, injustice, cruelty, intemperance, waste of time, property and talents, and thus temporally visits the idolatrous parents' sins and sufferings on his children, by entailing on them, diseases, a bad name, and poverty.

Thus is the visitation of the parents' sins upon the children, mentioned in the ten commandments, perfectly true, in a *temporal* sense, and perfectly reconcilable with the declaration that the son shall not bear the sins of the father, in a *spiritual* sense, and in the future world. Indeed since they neither marry nor are given in marriage in Heaven, where there is no generation, the visiting to the third and fourth generation can have no reference to

Heaven, but must be limited to this life and this world, where alone there are generations. This, then, is an additional proof of the visitations not extending to the final judgment, since the effects of it are limited to the *generations* of this life.

Nor let it be farther urged, that we are still punished for Adam's sin, by the labour, diseases and death we are obliged to undergo. 'Tis true we are subjected to these trials of adversity in consequence of the first sin. But these are not punishments for that sin, which we did not commit, and which we could not have committed, or consented to 5,000 years before we were born. Had not Adam fallen, some of his immediate descendants probably would, and would thus have entailed misery on *his own* descendants at least. Or had Adam not fallen, he and his posterity should have been exposed to the temptations of prosperity, as trying as those of adversity. We are, it is true, temporal sufferers, by the fall of man, or rather by the first offence. But these sufferings yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, "working out for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory."

If you admit this plain essay into your useful publication, I shall probably carry on my comparison of spiritual things with spiritual, to an explanation of the 5th chapter of Paul's Epistles to the Romans, the strong hold of those who insist upon being guilty of another's offence, in addition to their own actual transgressions.

In the mean time, may I hope, I have proved the absurdity of comparing Scripture, the *material*, with reason, the instrument; and the propriety of comparing and harmonizing texts that *appear* to differ from each other, i. e. (in Scripture language) "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." I have endeavoured also, to show, that the sins of the fathers are visited on their children *temporally*, but not *spiritually*, or eternally, and that these temporal visitations are for our spiritual good.

Q.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

THE following Letter was written by Mrs. Savage of Wrenburywood, near Whitchurch in Shropshire, daugh-

ter of the Rev. Philip Henry, to the Curate of her Parish, bearing date January 14th, 1717.

Dear Sir,

I have long desired an opportunity of conversing with you, and know not how to excuse for my doing it thus, since you are so obliging and easy of access, but only for privacy; since it becomes such as I am "silently to learn." Yet we are also commanded "to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us, with meekness and fear;" therefore you will pardon my boldness in thus expressing my thoughts, as women's tongues and pens sometimes claim a freedom, which men, who are more wise and reserved, will not use. It is, or may be thought, our unhappiness to differ from the Established Church in some lesser things; but while we agree in Fundamentals, why should there be among us, strife and envyings?

The high charge we had yesterday from you, of "Devilish pride, arrogance, &c." I cannot account light, especially from one who should stand in the place of God to guide and instruct us in the way to Heaven. I think it invidious to judge men's hearts, which none but God can do. It cannot be in itself sinful to dissent from a Church, else why did we cast off the yoke of Rome? For my own part, I do freely confess, I have seen so much sincere piety, fervent charity and humility, practised by those I have joined with, and have found such solid peace and tranquillity in the way I have walked, that I shall never be either allured or affrighted from it. The name of Schism, that ecclesiastical scarecrow, is industriously, though falsely, thrown upon us, as I have seen proved; but if it is so, who is in fault? the imposers of things they own unnecessary, or we who dare not comply with them, yet desirous to give up everything for the sake of peace, but truth. I must say, as every impartial person will, that if the Non. Cons. are mistaken, they are most unhappy, to exclude themselves from every thing that is desirable in the world, and expose themselves to poverty, scorn and hatred. Yet I must do them the justice to tell you, I never remember to have heard any one public reflection from any of them on the Established Church. I need not here enter into the

merits of their cause, which has so many abler advocates, only I must take the freedom to express my resentment, that we have heard from the Pulpit such keen reflections as we cannot well bear, and which I am sure, do no real good to any. The great things of the Gospel faith in Christ, repentance unto life, and new obedience, these are enough to spend our zeal about; for, as a worthy person writes, "our lives are short, our work great, our souls precious, Heaven and Hell real things, and all that must be done for eternity, must be done quickly, or it will be too late;" therefore I am always glad to hear Ministers insist on these great things. I was much affected many years ago, with a sermon I wrote down from you on these words, "purifying to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," and I wish you would preach and pray as you did then. Yet, good sir, excuse my freedom in thus giving vent to my thoughts. I think there is no family in the Parish that are accounted Dissenters, but ours; yet you know, we are as true friends to you and the Church, as any in the Parish; perhaps more so than many, who profess to be entire members of the Church of England; and as many of our family attend you as from most of the like number. It is therefore, sad to me, that we should be more censured, and worse thought of than numbers are, who absent themselves through ignorance and carelessness. "It is well we are not to be each others judges," said my honoured Father, when dying, "follow peace and holiness, and let them say what they will." This has been my sincere endeavour, and I solemnly protest, I have not tried to draw my children into the same way, otherwise than what my example might do; though some of them have taken pains to study those points, and are not Presbyterians by chance, but of choice; for I desire them not to pin their faith on my sleeve, but choose for themselves, and if they take this despised way it is not because they know no other, but because they know no better. I have heard many complain, that you speak so low, they can scarcely hear you, but I observed yesterday, you could raise your voice, and could I have forseen our treatment, I believe my seat would have been empty. I know not how they will answer it, who beat their fellow servants, and cast stones instead of bread. I know not what the church would have; they have all the pro-

fits and advantages they can desire; yet, because the government takes off their power to persecute, it avails nothing. But I am quite tedious, and beg your pardon a thousand times for my freedom.

I truly respect your person and ministry, and pray for its success. I am satisfied you well know the great worth of all souls, and the great danger of most; which thought will quicken you to cry aloud, and show your hearers their sins and duty before it is too late.

What a blessed place is Heaven, where will be no divisions nor disturbance for ever! To which glory may He bring us who hath most dearly bought us with his own blood. I am, dear sir, your sincere well-wisher,

SARAH SAVAGE.

PHILIP HENRY, was born in 1631, at the Palace of Whitehall. His father, John, had spent his life at court, and was then page to the Duke of York, afterwards James II. One of Philip's baptismal sponsors was, Philip, Earl of Pembroke, from whom he derived his name and some assistance in his education. While a boy, he attended on the young Princes, Charles and James, at their sports; and to all these circumstances he was indebted for the gentleness and courtesy, by which he was distinguished. That they had no bad influence on his principles will appear in the sequel.

The change in public affairs occasioned his removal from court, and he became a pupil of Dr. Busby, at Westminster, who employed him in collecting materials for his Greek Grammar, composed in Latin verse, and took particular pains in preparing him for the sacrament, previous to his being sent to C. C. C. Oxford, as a King's scholar. When he was ejected from his living by the act of uniformity, he paid a visit to his old preceptor, who received him with these words—"Pri-thee, child, what made thee a Non-conformist?"—to which he replied,—“Truly, sir, you made me one; for you taught me those things, which hindered me from conforming.” While at school, he was allowed to attend the morning lectures of the assembly divines in the Abbey.

At college, his talents and learning procured for him those offices, which required such qualifications,

though Anthony Wood has not thought proper to honour him with a place in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*. During his stay there, he was invited by Sergeant Paleston to instruct his children, and preach at Worthenbury, in Flintshire; where he was ordained in the Presbyterian form, 1657. Here he preached funeral sermons for all, rich and poor, thinking these occasions peculiarly favourable to edification, and allotted one-tenth of his income to charitable purposes. Notwithstanding this, he was twice presented at the assizes as an offender against the existing ecclesiastical laws.

Soon after his ordination, he married a lady of fortune, and became possessed of the estate of Broad Oak, near Whitchurch, in Shropshire, to which he retired, after he was ejected in 1662.

On the passing of the five mile act, he was obliged to remove from home, but in 1667 he returned with his family to Whitchurch. He and his neighbours agreeing with the doctrines of the church, and objecting only to kneeling at the sacrament, had no scruple about attending the ordinary service, as his daughter afterwards did; but he conceived it to be his duty, as an ordained minister, to administer the Lord's Supper to them, though this was contrary to law, and exposed him to penalties. In the same year he even ventured to preach in the parish church at Betley, Staffordshire. Next year he returned to Broad Oak.

In 1681, he was exposed to petty persecution, though he attended the church service, rather than abandon public worship, and only preached in barns. One instance will serve to characterize those times. "He was apprehended and fined £40; and on refusing payment, for he had not preached, they took away thirty-three loads of corn, that lay out on the ground, together with hay, coals, and other chattels. The informers fined the master of the house £20, and £5 more as being a constable that year, and exacted five shillings a head from one hundred and fifty, who were at the meeting. Examples of this kind, in London, Middlesex, and other counties are innumerable." To degrade him in the eyes of the people, he was also appointed to a mean office.

Dr. W. Lloyd, bishop of St. Asaph's, wishing to reconcile the Nonconformists to the church, visited dif-

ferent towns, to converse with the ministers, and invited Mr. Owen, of Oswestry, to a public conference in the town-hall, with liberty to bring an assistant. He chose Philip Henry; and the bishop brought with him the learned Henry Dodwell. The conference was conducted with great freedom and calmness, on the part of the disputants. The bishop afterwards corresponded with Mr. Henry, and told him, he did not account him *σχισματικός*, but *παρασυναγωγός*.

In 1688, Mr. Henry was invited to bring in his claims, as a plundered minister, but he declined, saying, that he forgave all. He was appointed a justice of the peace, but resigned the commission, confining himself to his ministerial duties. He died, June 24, 1696, leaving Mrs. Savage, Matthew Henry, and other children.

Mrs Savage was born in 1664, and educated by Mr. W. Turner, the family tutor, and her father, who instructed her in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. She was married in 1687, to Mr. John Savage, of Wrenbury Wood, Cheshire, near Pamptwich. One family of her descendants is now residing in Belfast. Her letter is printed from a copy in their possession. She died, Feb. 27, 1752, in her 88th year. There is another family living in Belfast, descended from Philip Henry by his daughter, Mrs. Holton.

Matthew Henry was born at Broad Oak, in 1662. His name may have been suggested by "Philip and Matthew" in the catalogue of the apostles, according to the taste of that age. He had his early education from his father; and was afterwards instructed by William Turner, vicar of Walburton, Sussex, till his 18th year. The discouraging state of Religion diverted his thoughts from the ministry; and induced him to enter Gray's Inns. He soon, however, returned to his first choice. He was ordained in London, and settled in Chester, where he continued for about twenty-five years, when he accepted a call to Hackney. On his return from a visit to his friends at Chester, he fell from his horse. He preached the same day, but died that night of apoplexy, at Namptwich, in 1714. His principal work was his expositions on the Bible; but he left it incomplete, having proceeded no further than the Acts of the Apostles. Some may wish to know, to whom

they are indebted for the continuation. They are as follows:—John Evans, *Romans*;—Simon Brown, 1 *Corinthians*;—Daniel Mayo, 2 *Cor.*, 1 and 2 *Thessalonians*;—Joshua Bayes, *Galatians*;—Samuel Rosewell, *Ephesians*;—William Harris, *Philippians and Colossians*;—Benjamin Andrew Atkinson, 1 and 2 *Timothy*;—Jeremiah Smith, *Titus and Philemon*;—William Tong, *Hebrews and Revelations*;—Samuel Wright, *James*;—Zechariah Mervill, 1 *Peter*;—Joseph Hill, 2 *Peter*;—James Reynolds, 1, 2, and 3, *John*;—John Billingsle, *Jude*.

I now conclude this article with recommending Mrs. Savage's letter to the attention of some of our inferior clergy, now and lately officiating in Belfast and its vicinity.

ERASMUS.

Intelligence.

ON Easter Monday, the first Anniversary of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, was held in Dublin.

By the arrangements of the Committee, the interest of the commemoration was distributed over four different occasions—two services, a public meeting, and a dinner of the friends of the society.

In order to avoid all collision with either the secular or religious claims on the public time, the first service, held in Strand-street Meeting-house, was allotted to Sunday, and commenced at an hour when most places of worship in the city are closed. The sermon was preached by Rev. W. J. Fox, of London. He took a broad and comprehensive survey of the practical advantages of the Unitarian controversy; he portrayed, and in portraying exemplified, the effect of purified Christianity, in imparting nobility to the intellect, expansion to the affections, purity and elevation to the views of human duty and expectations. This sermon we regard as a remarkable instance of the persuasive efficacy of truthful delineation, without minute argumentative detail; its logic is in its moral beauty and power. We say no more of it, because, in conformity with the earnest request of the Society in whose behalf it was preached, it will shortly appear in print. On the morning of Easter Monday, Rev. H. Montgomery, of Belfast, preached in Eustace-street Meeting-House; and, with much of his peculiar power of manly and touching appeal, exhibited the moral argument against Calvinism, and contrasted the horrors of that system, its dark picture of God, and man, and futurity, with the impressions of joyous devotion, and benevolence, and hope, which pour in upon the mind from the universe, and life, and Revelation. This powerful vindication of the Divine and human character is also promised to the public, at the especial request of the Society.

After the service on Monday, the Annual General Meeting of the Society, open to all, was held in Eustace-street Meeting-House; Jones Stevelly, esq., president of the Society, in the chair. The numbers who were present, and the interest awakened by the proceedings, far exceeded all previous expectations. The following resolutions, with others relating exclusively to the business of the Society, were successively recommended and carried.

1.—That the cordial thanks of the Society are due to Rev. W. J. Fox, and Rev. H. Montgomery, for their eminent and resplendent services on the present occasion.

2.—That this Society, deeming it of great importance, that those who are united in principle should be united in name, and earnestly desirous to see all minor diversities of sentiment absorbed in the great truth that “to us there is One God, the Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ,”—observes with satisfaction the increasing disposition on the part of liberal Christians in this country to adopt the comprehensive name of *Unitarian*:—that the thanks of all friends of free enquiry are due to those able and ingenuous men in the North of Ireland, by whose example and influence that title is spreading there:—and that, when it is perceived that our leading object is to exhibit the Divine character in those beautiful lights with which Revelation invests it, but which the popular theology mournfully darkens, there is hope that the prejudices which still obstruct its diffusion, will rapidly disappear.

3.—That we owe our warm thanks to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, for the fraternal cordiality with which it has hailed and helped our first exertions; and that from the continuance of its sympathy, we shall feel encouraged to persevere amid those first and more formidable difficulties through which the exertions of that Association have, with the Divine blessing, steered our sacred cause in England.

4.—That we have embraced with satisfaction the opportunities which the past year has afforded of personal intercourse with some distinguished brethren from America, and affectionately receive the assurances of Christian sympathy which have reached us thence: and that the state and prospects of pure Christianity, and the truly evangelical spirit of its defenders, in that enlightened land, is regarded by us with delight, with gratitude and Christian emulation.

5.—That this Society contemplates with great satisfaction, the progress of Unitarian Christianity in Switzerland, and particularly the steadiness and energy of the Pastors and people of the Church in Geneva, amidst the obloquy with which they have been assailed, both at home and abroad, by the advocates of an exclusive system of theology.

6.—That this Meeting has heard with satisfaction, of the earnestness and zeal of the Cork Branch Society, and persuaded of the value of frequent and free interchange of sentiment in stimulating enquiry and eliciting truth, recommends the Committee to advise the establishment of periodical meetings for theological conversation in connexion with the several District Societies.

It is much to be regretted that no Reporter attended, to place on permanent record the animated proceedings of this Meeting. The

impression produced by the introduction of the 2d Resolution by the Rev. W. J. Fox,—an impression which the Rev. H. Montgomery's proposal of the 5th Resolution well sustained; but which it surpassed even his extraordinary powers to increase,—will never be forgotten by the many whose indifference it startled, whose efforts it cheered, and whose hearts it touched. The Report of the Committee, which was received and ordered to be printed, will be found below.

At the dinner more than Eighty sat down; among whom it was gratifying to observe some members of Orthodox Churches. There was nothing in the arrangements to distinguish this social gathering from other similar occasions, but the presence and the inspiring eloquence of the two distinguished strangers whose advocacy the Society had engaged, and the novelty in Dublin of such an excitement in such a cause, gave to the evening an interest memorably vivid and brilliant.

The general effect of this Anniversary has been conclusive of the fate of the infant and struggling Society in Dublin. Operating on a class of minds ready for action, but needing a decisive stimulus to awaken them, it has contributed a vast store of energy and hope to that Society, has placed it beyond its first perils; has augmented its resources; has softened its enemies; has cheered its friends; and has attracted the philanthropic and the pious by showing the affinity of its objects to the best interests of man and the glory of God.

REPORT.

In presenting the Report of the first proceedings of your Society, your Committee cannot refrain from warning you at the outset, against any large expectations from the incipient efforts of an infant institution in promotion of an oppressed cause. They are of opinion, that such unreasonable expectations, proceeding from the preference of the imposing to the useful, which constitutes the bad taste of benevolence, have imparted to the Reports of religious societies a style of declamatory and boastful exaggeration, which justly weakens the confidence in their truth. It is the object of your Committee to give a faithful account of the mode in which they have administered their trust, of the amount of valuable interest which their resources may have circulated, and of the means of extended usefulness which appear to them to demand increased exertion.

It was to be expected that the necessary expenses of organizing and setting in motion the machinery of the Society, would contract its operations during the first year of its existence. It has been the object of your Committee to reduce, as much as possible, the merely instrumental and unproductive expenditure of your funds, by the employment of voluntary zeal instead of paid services; and in this they have been especially aided by the kindness of a well-known, and public-spirited member of the Society, who has liberally afforded to the Committee a room in the Northumberland Buildings, with

all accompanying accommodations, in which to hold their monthly or special meetings. With every assistance, however, the cost of printing circulars, of purchasing the first book-stock of the Society, and of providing book-cases for its reception, has considerably exceeded the average of the annual incidental expenses. The encroachment, from such causes, on an income which does not at present amount to £130, must obviously have borne a large proportion to the whole. On the other hand, the extraordinary exigencies of the first year, have met with extraordinary aid. The liberal donations of books to the amount of £5 from the West Riding Tract Society; of £5, from the Western Unitarian Society, and of £25 from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, have not only afforded cheering assurances of the sympathy of our brethren in England, but rendered an efficient, and almost necessary addition to the materials of usefulness at the disposal of your Committee. It must also be remembered that, with a view to carry the Society securely through its first difficulties, many of its friends became life-members rather than annual subscribers; and that, however convenient, or even necessary, may be such special aid at the origin of the Society, its cessation or diminution at the end of the first year cannot but be seriously felt. At the same time that the Committee have great satisfaction in being able to report an increase in the amount of subscriptions this year, they must be permitted to urge the continued necessity of exertion to increase the funds of the Society. For the guidance of their successors, they would record their opinion, that efforts should be particularly directed towards augmenting the provincial contributions. In Dublin, the Society may be said to have a principle of self-diffusion; every member is, or may be, an advocate and promoter of the Society, and its annual meetings, if conducted with due publicity, keep it sufficiently before the view of those who have any sympathy with its objects. But in the country, where there are no such periodical mementos, the very existence of the Society is in danger of being forgotten, or its design of being misunderstood, unless effectual measures be taken to awaken a permanent interest. Four District Societies have been already formed; others are in progress, and by observing the causes in which these had their origin, the Committee are enabled to suggest two methods by which the operations of the Society may be extended.

1. Local agents may be appointed from the known friends of Unitarian Christianity in different places, and may be requested to receive and distribute Catalogues and other Publications; to collect and transmit subscriptions, and, by every available means, to awaken an interest in the affairs of the Society.
2. A Minister may occasionally be sent from Dublin on a mission to some of the principal towns in Ireland, for the express purpose of encouraging Unitarianism where it is weak, and bringing its zeal into action where it is strong. Your Committee cannot avoid expressing a hope that District Societies may not have the effect of intercepting all individual subscriptions from the places where they are organized. If this should be the case, your Society must for ever remain exclusively a book-association, and be debarred from ever carrying

into effect the missionary objects which were distinctly contemplated at its formation. While the local bodies may usefully represent the tract department of your Society, various other fields of usefulness will undoubtedly open from time to time, with the power of entering which the central society should be entrusted by the liberality of distant friends. The District Societies which have hitherto been formed, are at Cork, at Moneyrea, at Carrickfergus, and at Bandon. The Committee have great satisfaction in stating, that an Association embracing the whole Province of Ulster, and denominated, the Ulster Unitarian Christian Tract Society, is about to be connected with this Society. The troubles which have so long broken the religious peace of the North of Ireland, having in a great measure subsided, it may be hoped that Christian truth may have found a fitting herald in Christian liberty. May Heaven shed the blessing of visible success on those noble pioneers of its march, by whom the vallies have been exalted, and the mountains been brought low.

As this Society originated mainly in the want felt of religious publications in harmony with the great principles of Unitarian Christianity, your Committee have deemed it requisite to confine themselves to the supply of this want, so long as the pecuniary resources at their disposal were not more than adequate to this purpose. Except in one instance, in which they voted a donation of books to the amount 30s. to Mr. Alexander Bradley of Saintfield, they have not even felt themselves authorized to circulate books gratuitously. The value of the books and tracts distributed during the year, is about £30; subscriptions having been repaid in books to the amount of about £14, and £16 having been received from the sale of stock. Desirable as it is these amounts should annually increase, it is impossible to question the good effected by even this circulation of rational and elevated views of Christianity; impossible indeed to calculate it, unless we had access to the minds to which these views have been presented, and could see what stimulus had been given to intelligent research, what perplexities had been relieved, what light infused, what moral courage awakened, what exalted thoughts imparted, of revelation, and duty, and God.

It has been urged on your Committee by an enlightened member of your Society, that the Theological information which they seek to diffuse, must meet with serious obstructions, so long as the authorized version of the Scriptures, notwithstanding all its merits of general accuracy, and its greater merits of taste, continues to be the final appeal of the English reader in matters of controversy:—that it should be a primary object with every Society professing a jealousy for Christian truth, to present to the world as nearly as possible what the sacred authors themselves wrote:—and that the mere circulation of another translation of the Scriptures would tend to shake the indiscriminating veneration for the common version (as if the translators were infallible and inspired,) which prevails among those to whom the works of learned commentators are inaccessible. On these suggestions, a Sub-Committee was appointed to consider whether the proposed object were practicable, and to report on the best method of accomplishing it. Three plans presented themselves: either to attempt a new translation; or to adopt and circulate some

complete existing version of the New Testament; or to reprint, in the cheapest possible form, the most approved translations of the several books of the Old and New Testaments. The last of these plans appeared to the Sub-Committee the most eligible, but, in the present state of the funds, to be impracticable. Your Committee fully accord with their learned and respected friend by whom this subject has been introduced, as to the intrinsic importance of the object, and leave their own proceedings on record for the assistance of their successors; and, in the mean time, it is satisfactory to believe, that the publications of the Society are scattering a mass of theological knowledge, and exciting a desire for religious truth, which may prepare the way for a juster appreciation of an improved version of the Scriptures than would at present reward the labours of a translator or an editor.

Though your Committee should be liable to the accusation of laying before you rather suggestions for the future than a report of the past, they cannot refrain from recording their conviction, that a wider field of usefulness is open to the first well-qualified missionary that you may be able to employ. Some opportunities of a peculiar kind have presented themselves, of sending Unitarian publications among the humbler classes, in parts of the South of Ireland; and the eagerness with which they have been received manifests a desire of religious light which it is encouraging to observe. And your Committee have been assured by members of the Cork District Society, whom they believe to be competent judges, that an intelligent, earnest, and affectionate Missionary of Unitarian Christianity, would find, in many districts, ready and grateful audiences. Persuaded of the truth of this statement, your Committee have only to regret that their means have not permitted them to enter on this animating field of exertion; and to hope that, until some regular Missionary can be sent forth by your Society, the settled Unitarian Ministers in large towns, may neglect no opportunity of extending their evangelizing efforts to any parts of the country round them that may afford an opening for their benevolent zeal.

Your Committee have now only to resign into your hands the powers which you have confided to them. Their time of service has been cast in "the day of small things;" but when they look back on the past year, and see the approach that has been made to a general recognition of the name of UNITARIAN, the degree in which the courage of the timid has been awakened, the prejudices of the misinformed removed, the scattered forces of Unitarian Christianity concentrated; they discern the promise of greater times, and they reverently leave the noble cause in which they have engaged,—the cause of religious truth, and Christian piety, and moral freedom—in the hands of that Being, "whose attributes it seeks to vindicate, and from whose word it derives its strength."

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN TRACT SOCIETY LONDON.

WE congratulate our Christian brethren of every denomination, on the introduction of these valuable publications into the North of

Ireland. They are "designed to inculcate moral conduct on Christian principles," and whoever reads them will be obliged to acknowledge, that they fully correspond with what they profess. Free from sectarian bigotry, they are well adapted to advance the happiness of individuals of every rank and age, and to better the morals of the community, by clearly pointing out the safety and advantage of discharging the relative and social duties, with constancy and punctuality. They will make of themselves a most excellent family library, from which parents and children, masters and servants, may collect very useful information. There is scarcely a virtue or a vice, from the recompense attendant on the honesty of the humblest cottager, to the misery which pursues the wealthiest prodigal, but what is described in a plain and striking manner. We have read, and, we hope, not without profit, the *sixty publications* to which we refer, and which are advertised on the cover of the present number, and we recommend them to our Christian brethren of every church. They are so truly practical, containing such variety of plain and useful matter, and are sold on such moderate terms, that we deem them particularly worthy the serious attention of the teachers and committees of day and Sunday schools, as premiums for children, and as lessons for fathers and mothers.

EDITORS.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

A NUMEROUS and highly respectable Meeting for the organization of this Society, was held on Saturday the 9th ultimo, in the Meeting-house of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, when John Holmes Houston Esq., of Orangefield, presided as Chairman.

The Rev. Fletcher Blakely, of Moneyrea, moved the 1st Resolution, viz:

That this Meeting, anxious to promote Religious Knowledge, and the practice of virtue, consider the formation of a Unitarian Tract Society eminently calculated to advance these important objects.

Mr. Blakely noticed the numerous publications in circulation, which were denominated Religious, and lamented that some of them were calculated to excite prejudices against Christianity, and to corrupt the public morality. He directed the attention of the Meeting to publications of the Speculative, Devotional and Practical kind, and went on to show, that the majority of Books and Tracts of the last description, had a constant tendency to set the standard of moral excellency at too low a point. He said, that Trinitarians complained that Unitarians misrepresented their opinions, and by wrong statements exposed them to ridicule. Lest he should state either too much or too little, a charge which was frequently preferred against many of his brethren, he would quote from the writings of different reputed Orthodox divines, whose works were popular and in general circulation. He would confine his quotations to their sentiments on the doctrines of the Trinity and satisfaction, by which it would appear, that they had plainly

contradicted the Bible and one another. He here quoted on these two points, the language of the Greeks and Latins, of Clowes, South, Wallis, Burnet, Horsley, Gastrell, Burgess, Dwight, Heber, Tillotson, Secker, Luther, Calvin, Allestree, Baxter, Flavel, Owen, Stockell, Trappe, Bunian, Beveridge, Collyer, Stewart of Andover, and others.

Having exposed their assertions, and their palpable contradictions among themselves, he vindicated Christianity as a plain and consistent system, and pressed his Unitarian friends to exert themselves for the extension of the Gospel of Christ, and to remove, as far as in their power, every impediment, that it might have free course and be glorified. He energetically urged it as a duty, which Unitarians owe to themselves to vindicate the honor and worship of God, and the character and declarations of Christ; to correct the misrepresentations of Trinitarians, the misapprehensions of Deists; and the horrifying ideas of the ignorant and prejudiced, by putting into the hands of the community cheap and silent missionaries, that better and more pure views of the Christian Religion might be disseminated.

Mr. Blakely having concluded a speech replete with excellent matter, the motion was seconded by Mr. Samuel Archer, of Belfast.

THE REV. H. MONTGOMERY, referred to the calumnies which had been heaped upon them by their opponents, who represented them as denying the authority of Scripture; whereas it was notorious, that they took the Scriptures alone as their guide, and rejected all human authority in matters of faith. The calumnies had often been refuted; but those who uttered them have not had the honesty to retract. It was, therefore, necessary, that means be taken to counteract the effects of such aspersions; and he believed it was only necessary to put truth and error together in order to give ascendancy to the former. He then referred to a proposition which had been made, to send forth a joint periodical publication, in which the disputed doctrines could be calmly supported or refuted. An opportunity was thus given to their opponents to send their truth into the congregations and families of the Remonstrants; but, strange to tell, they rejected the proposition, and would not adopt so obvious a means of promoting truth, but prefer letting the poison go by itself. Separate publications had been started. He thought something more should be done. It was necessary to advocate the fundamental doctrines; but it was also important to inculcate the calm moral duties and affections of life. Their brethren in Dublin had done much good by circulating religious tracts, and by religious conversations. They had drawn over to them persons from the Established Church, and from other churches usually denominated Orthodox. He was aware that difficulties would have to be encountered. Some would be ready to say, that they would disturb the harmony of society. He contended that nothing was more adverse to the spirit of Christian charity than an apathy which would hesitate to promote what was held to be truth. The fear of being charged with proselytizing would also operate against them. For his part, he avowed it to be his object to make proselytes; and he could not conceive how any man was doing his duty who did not attempt to

convince others of what he believed to be a vital truth. He (Mr. M.) avowed it to be the dearest object to his heart, to draw all men over from error. He would do this, however, not by violent means, but would go forth solely with "the sword of the Spirit." He then proceeded to point out the spirit of inquiry that was abroad, and the prospects of aid and co-operation which appeared to cheer them in their labours; and urged the importance of adopting means for placing the means of religious information in the hands of the people. He concluded an eloquent address, by stating, that he thought they should go straight forward, with their name and objects proclaimed before them. He would, therefore, move an amendment to the resolution which had been proposed.

After a few observations and suggestions by R. Montgomery, Esq. Rev. Dr. Bruce, W. Tennent, Esq. and some others, the original motion was withdrawn, and the following resolution, seconded by Samuel Archer, Esq., was unanimously agreed to.

That this meeting, anxious to promote religious information and the practice of virtue, considers the formation of a "Unitarian Society for the diffusion of Christian Knowledge" eminently calculated to advance these important objects.

The Rev. W. Bruce proposed the next resolution, which was seconded by G. J. M'Intyre, Esq. and unanimously agreed to.

That as the primary means of accomplishing these objects, a Unitarian Tract Society be now formed to procure and disseminate such religious publications as are best calculated to correct prevailing errors, and inculcate sound religious views.

The Rev. John Porter moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Dr. Burden, and passed unanimously:—

That this society, though holding itself independent, shall correspond with the *Irish*, the *London* and *Boston* Unitarian Associations, and all others having in view the extension of rational Christianity.

William Bristow, Esq. moved a series of rules and regulations for the management of the Society, which were unanimously agreed to.

It was then moved and agreed to, that the following gentlemen constitute a Committee for the ensuing year:—J. H. Houston, W. Tennent, W. Bristow, Esqs. Rev. H. Montgomery, Rev. W. Bruce, Rev. J. Porter, Rev. F. Blakely, Rev. J. A. Johnston, J. Andrews, C. Dobbin, J. Dunville, S. Archer, W. Emerson, J. Hodgson, G. J. M'Intyre, D. Simms, R. Gamble, jun. W. M'Fadden, J. C. Campbell, Esqs.—J. Riddell, Esq. Treasurer, and Dr. Burden, Secretary.

W. Tennent, Esq. was then called to the chair, and the marked thanks of the meeting voted to Mr. Houston.

CORRESPONDENTS.

A BELIEVER IN CHRIST, to the Theological Students of the Belfast Institution, is unavoidably postponed.—Several Articles are under consideration,

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[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ON PUBLIC FASTS.

SOME divines entertain an opinion that nations in their collective capacity, are so far different from the individuals of which they are composed, that they may commit sins for which none of their subjects are accountable; may therefore be subject to punishment in their aggregate character as nations or bodies politic; and consequently ought by humiliation and contrition to endeavour to avert such judgments.

This conclusion I cannot deny, though I differ from the premisses from which it is deduced. The practical inference is just, though the theory is erroneous. Every sin must be committed by one or more individuals: and every principle of justice seems to pronounce, that they alone should be answerable for it. Whatever pains certain theological systems may take to justify other kinds of various punishment, the people will scarcely be persuaded, that they should be punished for the transgressions of their rulers. That they do actually suffer distress in consequence of such misconduct is certain; and they submit to this inconvenience, as they do to the other incidental consequences of the Divine Laws; but that such afflictions are the effect of imputed guilt, is an idea, that the common sense of mankind can scarcely reconcile with any true conceptions of justice.

Notwithstanding what I have said, it may be consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God to inflict national calamities for national sins, because the people by a due exertion of their influence might have prevented them, and because such interpositions may have a more powerful and extensive influence than the separate punishment of each individual; and may conduce to the

edification of all. Some innocent persons may suffer, but to this they are liable in every general dispensation of Providence: and while this world is not considered as the scene of moral, at least of final retribution, no harm is done. The sufferings of the innocent are indeed inseparable from the punishment of the guilty, even in the destruction of individuals. A person in power cannot become an object of Divine vengeance, without occasioning equal, perhaps greater distress to his harmless family and virtuous friends, than he may suffer himself.

For these reasons I admit, that national judgments may often be justly inflicted for public and general transgressions. But as such offences are for the most part perpetrated by those who are authorized to act for the nation, it principally behoves persons in that exalted situation, to feel contrition and to express humiliation. They should humble themselves not only for their crimes, but for their consequences; not only for deserving the Divine indignation themselves, but also for drawing it upon others. Thus says Daniel, xi. 8, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our Fathers, because we have sinned against thee." "To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him." It may be proper to observe, that by fathers are meant the elders, the priests, the magistrates, the judges and the senators. The appointment of a day of humiliation may therefore be a very laudable interference of government, when they are sensible, that the political conduct of the nation has justly incurred, or provoked the displeasure of the Almighty: and as such proposals always originate with persons in authority, it is to be hoped, that they will be most forward and serious in deploring those sins, of which, if they exist at all, they must be the principal authors. And independently of these more public offences, there may be such an accumulation of private vice, and the people in general may have become so corrupt, that national distress may be justly deemed the most suitable correction. In such cases, it may be very becoming in government to exhort their subjects to general acts of humiliation: and with these exhortations, a pious christian will feel no scruple to comply, though he may treat with deserved contempt

their threats of Divine wrath, over which they seem to claim some direction, and even the menaces of temporal authority, the interference of which, in spiritual affairs, we utterly reject and reprobate, as Protestant Dissenters. Both of these usually make part of a proclamation for a national fast.

As this practice may be thus shown to be agreeable to reason, so will it be found consonant to the behaviour of holy men recorded in Scripture. To these authorities it is our custom to appeal in preference to human ordinances. Let us then consider some of those instances of fasts, which we meet with in the sacred books, with a view to vindicate the practice, to review the various causes for which such appointments are made, and to discover the manner in which they should be observed.

1. That the practice may be justified by Scriptural authority and example is, I suppose, undeniable. As to authority we have such declarations as these proceeding from the Almighty himself. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."....."At what time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, then will I repent of the evil, that I thought to do them. And at what instant, I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."....."Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments." These declarations are sufficient to prove, that nations may be punished for public crimes, and general profligacy, and that when they are conscious of such sins, it becomes them to prostrate themselves before the Lord.

That wise and holy men complied with these admonitions will also appear from a few select instances which occur in holy writ. A calamitous civil war having taken place between the Benjamites and the other tribes,

we are told, that "all the children of Israel, and all the people went up and came unto the house of the Lord, and fasted that day until evening." Again, the Israelites having been guilty of idolatry, and repenting of that sin, Samuel appointed a fast in Mispah. In like manner, Ezra on his return from captivity, is said to have "proclaimed a fast." And Esther, being about to undertake a dangerous office for the good of her countrymen, desired that all the Jews at Shusan might fast and pray for her. We meet with examples of the same kind in Jeremiah, Joel, Zechariah, and Jonah.

2. From the same sacred records we may also learn the various reasons, good and bad, which have induced men to proclaim public fasts. The earliest instance of any thing resembling a general fast is the transaction between Balah and Balaam; and the motive seems to have been gross superstition and fear. Balah being greatly intimidated by the numbers and success of his enemies, could think of no better expedient to dissipate his apprehensions, and defeat the children of Israel, than calling upon Balaam to curse them. "Curse, now, therefore, I pray thee; curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land." Balaam seems to have been as well disposed to anathematize the Israelites, as any that have followed him; especially when he was entreated by princes and honourable men, and tempted with a promotion to very great honour, but he was deterred by a superior influence. "How shall I curse," says he, "whom God hath not cursed; or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" One excuse, however, may be made for Balaam's alacrity in this business. It was reserved for a greater prophet than he to teach, "that we should pray for our enemies: that we should bless and curse not." Since we, however, enjoy the instruction of that benevolent teacher, it would betray a shameful inattention to religious principle, were we to abuse any office of devotion to such an unchristian and Moabitish purpose, as cursing our enemies.

In after times, we find Jehosaphat paying the Moabites in their own coin: for finding that "he had no might against the great company, that came out against him, he feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and

proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." His motive appears to have been more innocent than Balah's, and I should trust, more common. He prayed for safety, without daring to send up imprecations to the throne of mercy.

The last instance which I shall quote, is one of the most detestable examples of hypocrisy and cruelty to be found in history: and I should hope, has no parallel in these days. Jezebel, with a view to get possession of Jaboth's vineyard, accused him of blasphemy, and in order to excite the public abhorrence, and work upon the feelings of the people, she "proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; and there came in two men, children of Belial, who witnessed against him. Then they carried him forth out of the city and stoned him!"

From the specimens I have given, we may form a judgment of the motives, by which men have been induced to appoint public fasts. They are partly laudable and partly culpable. The praiseworthy reasons for public humiliation are contrition for sin; a sense of imperfection, and a desire of divine protection in the performance of some arduous duty; the ratification of some solemn promise to renounce a vicious practice; and to supplicate the Almighty, that we may not be exposed to some calamity which we see cause to apprehend.

The criminal motives are such as these—malice, revenge, cursing our enemies, a desire of concealing some detestable design under the mask of religion, and a hope of working on the prejudices of the people by covering a nefarious purpose with the formalities of devotion.

Which of these classes has most influence, it is not my province to determine. We have already ascertained, that there are pious ends to be promoted by public humiliation: and we know, that such religious acts are called for more frequently than we are invited by public authority to perform them.

In the 3d place, let us search the scriptures for some directions concerning the due observance of a public fast. These we find forcibly and beautifully delivered in the 58th chap. of Isaiah. The prophet introduces the people complaining to the Almighty, that their numerous fasts and penances had produced no favourable

change in the situation of their affairs: and then represents Jehovah as condescending to explain the cause of their inefficacy.

The first cause is, that "in the day of their fast they found pleasure." While they were in circumstances of the deepest affliction, they were so inattentive to their situation as to indulge in luxury: while they pretended to humble themselves before God, presuming to hope and pray for his favour, they abandoned themselves to vicious gratifications and insolent ostentation.

The second is thus expressed, "and exact all your labours." At the very moment, when they prayed to be delivered from oppression, they rigorously insisted upon the performance of the most grievous duties by their servants and slaves; and thereby evinced what use they would make of their power, if restored to prosperity.

If we in modern times are chargeable with these offences of licentiousness and oppression, it is to be feared, that we are yet more exposed to the next accusation. "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness."

Vices of which the Jews were guilty, and of which we are not innocent, are scorn and contention. I join them together because they are generally accompanying each other; and indeed the latter is often occasioned by the former. "Put out the scorner and contention shall go out; yea, strife and debate shall cease." These are faults that become very prevalent at periods, when the minds of men are much agitated by political or religious controversy. Every man becomes so obstinate and zealous, so fully convinced of the truth of his own principles, and so much disposed to suspect the virtue and good intentions, as well as the good sense of those who differ from him, that he can scarcely refrain from treating them with scorn; and as the other party is actuated by equal bigotry, pride and bitterness, contention is the certain consequence. But surely such a spirit is most incompatible with a day of humiliation, as well as peculiarly unsuitable to a period in the history of the world, which seems calculated to set at nought the wisdom of the wise, to puzzle the knowledge of the learned, and to laugh to scorn the foresight of the prudent.

It seems to be a principal object of modern fasts to

interest the Almighty in our quarrels, to prevail upon him to support our side of the question, to take a part in our strifes and debates, and to strengthen our arm, that we may more effectually "smite with the fist of wickedness." Wretched mortals, that we are! We not only extravagantly overrate the importance of our disputes, but entirely overlook the evil passions in which they commence, the injustice and cruelty with which they are too often conducted, and the ungodly use which we should make of success.

After this enumeration, the most high is represented as breaking out into this indignant reproof—"Is it such a fast, that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul," or practice outward mortifications? "Is it to bow down his head like a bullrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" In the same energetic strain he proceeds to explain the nature of that fast which would be truly pleasing in his sight, and might conciliate his favour. Is not this "the fast that I have chosen?" And then he proceeds to enumerate the good actions by which a day of humiliation should be signalized.

The first injunction is "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke." Hence it appears, that the first requisite to the due discharge of this duty, and for obtaining the divine favour is, to abstain from oppression, and to promote the progress of liberty: to redress grievances and repeal oppressive laws. This is the duty of men in power: and it is not less the duty of private individuals to do justice, and restore to every one his just and lawful rights.

The second injunction is "to deal thy bread to the hungry; and that thou bring the poor, that are cast out, to thy house; when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." Charity, then, is the second duty of a day of humiliation. It is reasonable, that we should abstain from violence, when we pray to be protected from it; that we should promote liberty, when we pray to have our freedom maintained: that we should exercise charity when we supplicate for relief from distress: and according to the precept of Christ, that we forgive others, when we pray for pardon.

The third condition for obtaining the favour of the Almighty, is "to turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and to honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words."

Piety is, therefore, the third virtuous disposition to be expected from those, who pray to the Lord in distress. This is so obvious and reasonable, that it cannot require any illustration. An act of devotion without piety is hypocrisy: and if neither those who appoint public fasts, nor those who attend upon them, are influenced by piety, they only aggravate their crimes. They provoke, instead of averting, the Divine judgments.

Lastly, to the performing of these offices of equity, charity, and piety, a very high reward is annexed. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning: and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer. Thou shalt cry; and he will say here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity: and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then shall thy light shine in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

ERASMUS.

THE EFFECT OF CALVINISM UPON THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—Among the many objections from reason and Scripture, that can be brought against the Calvinistic system of doctrines, it has always seemed to me to be

an important one, that it has a tendency to weaken very much the evidence that we have for our belief in Christianity. It has been often remarked, that where Calvinism is the prevailing creed, there are more unbelievers than under the prevalence of more rational systems. This remark I have often heard made, and my own experience has confirmed it in its full extent. Nor is it at all extraordinary, that this should be the case: for there are various ways in which the evidences of religion are affected by this creed.

The Evidences are of two kinds, external and internal. Without reliance on human testimony, we can have no external evidence. Suppose us to be convinced that the whole human race was incurably and unavoidably disposed to every thing that was wicked and wrong; and suppose us to be also satisfied that lying is a very wicked thing, what conclusion can we draw but that every testimony given by man in his unregenerate state, is a wilful lie? If sincerity be not only laudable, but an essential requisite in every person upon whose testimony we rely; and if our suspicion of a person's testimony is proportioned to our suspicion of his sincerity, what are we to say in a case, where insincerity must be in its greatest possible degree—as every other bad quality must be in one who “is wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body,” “utterly indisposed, disabled and *made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil?*”

This total want of every good principle, is destructive of the testimony of the individuals concerned as to what they saw and heard, and prevents the force of that testimony from being increased, by the number of persons concerned as witnesses: for there is no multiplication of persons wholly inclined to lying and insincerity, (which are surely component parts of “all evil,”) that can produce sincerity and truth. There could in fact, have been no sincerity and veracity in the world at the time, and therefore we must part with all that confidence that we have (to our great deception) been disposed to place in the concurrence of plain, honest men as to their testimony to our Saviour's character, conduct, and miracles.

Men have hitherto been disposed to place great reliance on the corroborative testimony of Pliny, Tacitus,

Josephus, &c., but we must now abandon all these ; because, being “wholly given to evil,” we cannot of course believe one word that they have said. They were entirely disposed to what was evil, and that by a necessity of nature imposed by an Almighty Being—and we cannot have a stronger assurance that every thing alleged by them was for a bad purpose. We may not be able to see how—but this we are assured of by the system, and also that mankind were under the dominion of an evil spirit, who had “*quam proximé*,” the attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, and who was using all the unregenerate as instruments for his own purposes. These seem to be necessary results of the Calvinistic system, as it is commonly expounded : for the corruption of the whole nature of man consists in the *universal* depravation both of soul and body, in all the faculties of the one, and members of the other : and it appears in an utter impotency and bitter enmity to what is spiritually good, and in the strongest inclination, and bias to what is evil, and *that only and continually*.

The apostles themselves are excluded from being competent witnesses, because our Saviour charges them at different times with want of faith ; and therefore they could not at those times have been regenerate, but must have had all their wicked and utterly depraved nature in full power and operation. At the time of performing the miracles, these men, being of characters so utterly and unavoidably depraved, cannot be depended upon at all ; nor were they competent to be witnesses of the resurrection, or of the identity of Christ after his rising from the dead, because they do not seem to have been regenerated until the effusion of the holy spirit ; prior to which their characters must, according to this system of doctrine, have been such, as would at present incapacitate them for being witnesses in any court of justice ; having no knowledge nor fear of God, no regard for truth, no aversion to lying and perjury, no proper notion of the obligation incurred by taking an oath. If the testimony that is now recorded be the same that would have been given before they received the gifts of the spirit ; that testimony must be suspected, because it must be the testimony of men at the time of their giving it, wholly abandoned to lying, dissimula-

tion, blasphemy, and every other sin. If it be not the same, but if the men, upon this total change in their views and feelings, this new birth, gave a different testimony from what they would have done the day before ; how can we confide in it ? how can we be expected to believe in testimony that varies at one time from what it was at another ? No one will, I hope, suspect me of holding such dishonourable opinions of these great and good men, but I cannot see how this difficulty is to be avoided by any Calvinist, who is sincere in maintaining the doctrines conveyed in the words of the authorised standard to which he appeals.

The effect of this system upon the internal evidences is no less disastrous. These internal marks are not to convince those who are already believers, but those who are as yet unconverted and irregenerate. The harmony and consistency of the gospel dispensation, with the other proofs of the infinite goodness and love of God, is one internal proof of its divine original ; but how can we allege this, when our very first position is that God, so far from being good and merciful, is filled with wrath against his rational offspring, so implacable, that nothing less than an infinite, eternal, omnipotent Being, submitting to a death of pain and ignominy, after having been immured for thirty-three years in a human body, could in any degree appease him, and that not to all but to a very small portion of elect persons. We cannot prove the goodness of God from the existence of a race of beings under the dominion of every vice, indisposed to any thing good or right, and wholly given up to wickedness and sin.

The usual marks of sincerity and veracity on the part of our Saviour are of no use at all, because these same traits, had, prior to his time, existed in a greater or less degree in many of our species. In these instances they are alleged to afford no satisfactory indications of these qualities ; by what rule of sound reasoning will they prove them in the other ?

The moral tendency of the precepts of Christ must be altogether sunk in our reasonings about the truth of Christianity, because very many of these rules of morality, less perfectly propounded indeed, less perspicuously stated, less authoritatively promulgated, but still essentially the same, are to be found in some of the an-

tient moralists. This circumstance has most unfortunately been brought forward by the *rational* defenders of Christianity in support of Christ's pretensions, as showing the unity of purpose between revelation and natural religion, but must be abandoned by all Calvinists, because any conformity with a system of natural religion, suggested and supported by persons so utterly depraved as all unregenerate persons were, must at once be fatal to its claims.

It also follows, that whatever moral truth or precept we find expressed in any heathen moralist, we must reject as unworthy of the gospel, because it is impossible that the same precept can be good and bad at the same time: it is impossible also, that a heart and mind utterly and hopelessly depraved, could, as it were, have anticipated revelation in the true principles of morals.—For example—the beautiful sentiment of our Lord, that “blessed are the pure in heart,” cannot be approved of as coming from him, and be censured as coming from Thales, who maintained that we should wish to have not only our hands, but our minds pure, since we must believe that the Divine Being is present to our secret cogitations. And yet how can a thoroughly depraved mind, whose every thought is sin, give utterance to any but a sinful sentiment: and again, how can the precise same sentiment be sinful, when it comes from the Milesian philosopher, and holy when it comes from the blessed Jesus? Thus too, Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, commands a man to honour his father and mother; and Plutarch, with several other antient philosophers, says, that we ought to reverence the Gods, to honour our parents, and to pay respect to the aged. Plutarch being unregenerate could do nothing but sin, and that continually. Was it a sin then to express such a sentiment? If not, must it not be an exception to Plutarch's sinning continually? If so, must not the sentiment be as sinful in Paul as in Plutarch? Or how are we to find access to the mind of an unbeliever, when every dictate of natural religion will reduce us to a similar dilemma? To give one other example—all the Gentiles from the utter depravity of their nature, could do nothing but sin; and yet Paul tells us that some of them did by nature the things contained in the law, shewing the work of the law written in their hearts. Does it

not follow from this, that the work of the law or the commandment of God is sin, and therefore that we should not do it? Does it not also follow that knowing God's will, and approving the things that are excellent, which are instructions of the law, are sinful? If the keeping of the law be sinful, as it must have been, because some Gentiles kept it, must not the breaking of the law be virtuous—but the breaking of the law is the dishonouring of God—is this then virtuous also? Into what intricacies and labyrinths does a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ lead men!

V. D. M.

EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH, WITH THE
LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS. FROM THE
BOSTON CHRISTIAN EXAMINER, FOR JULY, 1830.

WE place this book at the head of an essay upon early religious instruction, not beause we mean to have any direct reference to its pages, but because we consider it the parent of most of the errors existing on that most interesting subject. At least we are not acquainted with any other work, which has had so extensive an influence, and we think it cannot fail to bear us out in any representations of erroneous practice on this subject, which we may feel obliged to notice.

Much has been said of late on the topic of education; and improvements are continually making in the adaptation of elementary instruction, particularly to the infant mind. Yet there is one most important branch of instruction, which still seems enveloped in difficulty and darkness. The best mode of imparting religious and moral truth to children in their earliest years, is yet a subject of anxious enquiry. There must be a way, and there is undoubtedly a way, to bring up our children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." But what that way is, we believe, is as yet as unsettled a question in intellectual and moral science, as has ever been proposed. There cannot be one more interesting. For that there has been a general failure in giving children

such religious impressions as exert a happy influence on their hearts and conduct, we think the experience of almost every one will bear witness. The cause of this failure may be a profitable subject of enquiry; and if it be found to exist in erroneous notions generally prevalent, an exposure of these errors is the first step towards the discovery we are so anxious to attain.

The whole bearing of the religious instruction of children, is, and ever has been, rather to keep them from sinning, than to inspire them with motives to virtue, and to aid them in its acquisition. This has given the subject its sombre and unlovely aspect to them; and the whole system of associations must be changed, before it can become a grateful one to the heart of a child. Most of us can remember, that our earliest religious impressions were the gloomiest we ever knew; utterly repugnant to our nature, ruinous to all our innocent enjoyments; and we have longed to deliver our own children from similar perversions. But how to make them feel religious sanctions without occasioning this distaste, has been a source of anxious, and we might almost say, fruitless experiment; nor have we received much assistance from the sermons, theories, and numberless other attempts to make the matter more easy.

To us it appears, that the grand difficulty lies at the very starting point. As we have intimated, the aim from the beginning should be, not to lay the foundation of religion in its terrors to evil doers, but in its encouragements and rewards to those who do well. That its efficacy would thus be diminished, no one who has had any acquaintance with children, can suppose. For while all the ardor of their spirits is at once aroused by a motive which strikes them agreeably, it is but a sullen or unwilling, far indeed from a joyous obedience, which they ever give to a threatened punishment. Our meaning may be illustrated by a familiar example.

A child, so young as scarcely to be able to discern between truth and falsehood, speaks them indiscriminately. By way of correction, the parent begins by telling him it is wrong to lie, and he must not do it. But, forgetting the line upon line, and precept upon precept, which she bestows on his other faults, and looking on this in the child, in the same light that she would regard it in the man, she becomes seriously

alarmed by its repetition, and determines to make a final effort to subdue it, not as she would do did she consider the sin against her own commands, merely, by a resort to Solomon's advice, but by bringing before his quick imagination, the awful tribunal of God, against whom the offence is committed. She takes him on her knee with tender concern, tells him first the story of Ananias and Saphira, and then teaches him to repeat that hymn by Watts, which represents God with his "great book," in which he "writes every lie that children tell," and ends with—

"————— every liar
Shall have his portion in the lake
Which burns with brimstone and with fire."

She has done her work indeed! The child, in deadly terror, never tells another lie. But alas! at what an expense has she laid the foundation of truth in that child's mind. She may labour to make him love his God, but she will labour in vain. He may strive in maturer life for that love which casteth out fear, but never, until the day when God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, shall he see him as he is; never, till that hour, will that mortal heart be free from the fearful impression. Thus, a hearty dislike to the thought of God is unwittingly implanted with the earliest religious lesson that childhood receives; and when the parent discovers it, she sets it down as a legitimate inheritance from Adam and Eve. But the truth is, that, if children could love the picture of God which is first given them in this way, it would be the strongest argument we could have of their native depravity. For what must be the original constitution of a mind, which would turn with involuntary affection to a being whose prevailing trait to them is power, whose favourite exercise of that power is the punishment of sinners, and whose image is ever before them, with his great book, where he writes down all their sins, and his dreadful lake of fire and brimstone, where he punishes them?

Is it said this is a partial and unfair statement, that every parent also presents the benevolent exhibitions of divine power? So they may, and so they do undoubtedly present them. But are they felt by their children as this is felt? By no means. The loveliness of all created nature has no power to charm them, while a

scene like this is before their imagination; and joyful would they be to hear, that such a potentate had withdrawn all his care from them, or to be assured that he had retired from his seat of judgment, and changed his lake into a fairer region. And can any one suppose they would be less likely to obey, and love him, after this relief to their minds?

We know it will be said, but is not this the gospel, and shall we not give our children a knowledge of the truth? To those who consider this language as figurative, we would say, that in giving it to their children, they do not teach them the truth, for they will understand in its most literal sense, what is only figuratively true. To those who consider it literal, we would point to our Saviour's example. He has sufficiently explained to us that young children are not subjects of the denunciations of the gospel; and to apply to them those terrors which he presented to the hardened sinners and accomplished hypocrites of that day, is a monstrous perversion of his example and teaching, and might well be attended by those pernicious consequences which have so abundantly followed from it. Here we receive a powerful condemnation—"of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child," is explicit language, and, if it means any thing, implies that a child's heart is not the abode of hellish passions, and no subject for hellish terrors, but that it is prepared by the hand of its Creator for all the happy influences of his religion.

Perhaps we have dwelt too long on this most glaring of all the errors with which this subject is embarrassed. There are others of a milder and less obvious character, which require our consideration. Although there may be some who have escaped this extreme, and many who do not resort to alarms in the teaching of their children, we suspect that even they have felt, that the impressions they have given of God are far from inspiring filial love. One error of this sort is the confused and indefinite idea of God, which is forced into their minds by what seems to us the mere effect of acting according to popular custom, without a thought of its propriety. In all other departments of instruction, what is to be taught is reduced to its simplest elements, and imparted to the child as he is able to receive it. But with reli-

gion, every thing is attempted at once. God's power, his omniscience, his omnipresence, his anger, his love, and his hatred, are all presented to him by turns, without a thought of what he is likely to make of all these terms, not one of which conveys to his mind any clear conception. All is done as if in this matter there was to be no progression, as if that science by whose light the human intellect is to be brought to its full developement, was to be opened at once to a child's feeble powers. But is it not manifest that this confused and incomprehensible abstraction, can never be the object of the affections of a child, even though it be attended by some just and affecting delineations of the divine character?

Nearly allied to this is the practice of teaching children "the doctrines," as they are called. This error tends to the same confusion as the last, and seems to originate in the same inconsiderate disregard of what a child is able to grasp. In adverting to it, we must notice a prevailing practice at the present day, of crowding children's books, of every description, with all the mysteries of the Calvinistic faith. It is not as differing from their writers in regard to these points, that we now speak. As to the doctrines themselves, they may be true or they may be false, their tendency may be salutary or it may be pernicious. This is a separate point, and one on which men differ. But in their relation to the present subject, we think every candid and discriminating parent will agree with us, that their truth or falsehood may be put out of the question. Whether true or false, they are alike injurious. To inculcate them, is to give incomprehensible matter for religion and as food for the infant mind and heart.

We have remarked, that the child's mind is treated as fit for the whole counsel of God, when all other subjects are simplified for it to the last degree, and to prove that it is so, we need but point to one of a thousand instances in the books to which we have alluded. It is a primer of Mrs. Sherwood's; and we choose this lady's writings as an example, because she is one of the most interesting writers for children, with whom we are acquainted. Her style is simple and touching, her story well planned, her moral conspicuous, her characters natural, her incidents well chosen. She shows a perception almost miraculous of the motives which are

apt to influence children, and has a rare skill in making the good attractive, and the evil shunned ; all, in a word, resulting in a powerful moral effect, and all made of no value to those who disapprove her doctrines, or are unwilling to abuse their children's minds by giving them words without knowledge. A technical and obscure theology is so intimately interwoven with the whole, that no reflecting parent, certainly no Unitarian parent, would be willing that his child should read her works. But to return to our subject and the primer. It begins with the A, B, C ; advances as a child must advance, and finishes with a simple story of easy words, well divided, to introduce him to the mystery of sentences, but in which the right preparation for heaven is communicated in this very edifying manner—"Those who are wash-ed in the blood of Je-sus Christ, will be ta-ken to hea-ven when they die ; but those who are not, will be cast into out-er dark-ness." It would seem like irreverence to set down, in plain terms, what a child's interpretation of this language would be ; not to speak of the usefulness of such teaching for any practical purpose. But in truth, this is nothing, compared with the flood of absurd technicalities which is poured forth from the Sunday School Union press, in thousands of volumes, measuring two inches by four, and containing twelve to fourteen pages, detailing in the simplest language the history of a lamb or a violet ; and at the same time artfully presenting the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, salvation by grace, the atonement, trinity, &c., and that, too, in good theological terms. In examining these infant manuals, we have been at a loss which most to admire ; the skill with which all this august matter is incorporated into such a body, or the inconceivable folly of supposing that the mind of a child can thus be impressed with christian feelings, christian motives, or christian hopes.

To illustrate the absurdity of this practice, we need but exalt any other science to the importance of religion, and suppose it subjected to the same process. Let us take grammar, for instance, and imagine it to unfold truths all important to our welfare, and the first to be communicated to our children. What should we say of the person, who, taking Murray's Abridgment for his manual, should begin with "Orthography, Ety-

mology, Syntax, and Prosody," and should look for practical results from such explanations as "common names of substantives stand for things containing many sorts, and for sorts containing many individuals under them?" But more than all, should we think it a sign of a corrupt nature, if this teaching were not agreeable to the taste of the child; and if under it, his mind and heart should not expand into their full and beautiful proportions? Ah! well do we remember the despair with which we learned by heart this obscure treatise for the twentieth time, without the slightest idea of its application to any earthly purpose, and the grateful joy with which we welcomed the friendly kindness which first took compassion on us, and, by adapting the subject to our capacity, brought light out of darkness, and order from this confusion. And is not the analogy between these two cases perfect?

But the grand inconsistency of the religious teaching we have alluded to, is, that its very first lesson is a "new heart." But if this were a matter of easy acquisition—and we do not see how it can be attempted by a child—it might still be a question, whether it would not be easier, more natural and reasonable, if the teaching were adapted to the heart, rather than the heart to the teaching. The day will come, and we wish it might be hastened, when that which has so long been thought a natural barrier to the entrance of religion into the child's mind, will be found the work of man, not of God. The same Being made the heart, that made the laws by which that heart should be governed. They are fitted to each other by a master's hand; and distorted indeed is that perception, which fails to see their perfect adaptation to each other. The religion of the gospel is the true element of our moral growth—the principle by whose energy all the elements of virtue and moral beauty which constitute the human soul, are to be developed and matured. We must see this, and consider religion as something to be used for the accomplishment of an intelligent purpose, before we can know its real value and design. We are not to regard it as something tangible to be given to our children; but as the means in our own hands by which their purposes are to be made habitually virtuous, and their affections secured to such objects as are pure and elevating in their nature; or, in

other words, the means by which they may learn to love God, and obey his commands.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

LETTER TO THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS OF
THE BELFAST INSTITUTION.

YOU are candidates for a very arduous profession, which is either injurious in the community, or involves principles and consequences by far the most important of any thing, that can arrest the human mind. If Christianity be an imposition, you are about to undertake an employment very laborious, and by no means profitable; but if it is from heaven, and leads its votaries to the prospect of eternal life, you cannot pursue a middle course with safety. If it be a cunningly devised fable, retire from a profession calculated to support hypocrisy and false hopes; but if it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him," for the comfort and consolation of the human race, labour to discover and to declare the whole counsel of God, without fear or reserve. If you be really persuaded that the gospel is from God, and that there is a power in the universe able and resolved to raise the human race to a state of endless happiness, it is impossible you can temporize or sophisticate on a subject the most serious that can engage your attention. The subject is worse than nothing, or ten thousand times greater than your imagination can either conceive or desire in time. Be honest then to the public, to yourselves, and to God.—"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

In the prosecution of your inquiries, take care that the love of popularity, the desire of worldly interest, and the influence of prejudice do not tempt you to compromise your principles. Remember, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God," and that HIS approbation is the best and most lasting riches. You should guard against taking the assertions of men as a rule of faith and practice, and you should compare all assertions with the declarations of Jesus Christ—"for he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him."

I would fondly hope that some of the statements which I have heard, respecting your confidence in the assertions of Dr. Dwight, are exaggerated. I mean the late Dr. Dwight, president of Yale College, in America, whose works, in five volumes octavo, have been lately published in England, under the title of "A SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY," and extolled above measure by our reputed orthodox divines and professors.

Unitarians, you are aware, have been thought bold and presumptuous when they have said, that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be established, until the word of God be overthrown. Dr. Dwight seems to favour this opinion, for, zealous to vindicate the platonic doctrine of a Trinity, he overlooks or undervalues all plain Scripture, and has recourse to bare assertion. He maintains that if Jesus Christ were not the eternal Jehovah, he was an impostor, and the Jews acted meritoriously in putting him to death. Plain people, unacquainted with metaphysics and Calvinistic divinity, would rather wonder how the Jews, acquainted with the Old Testament, dare even venture to think of crucifying the eternal Jehovah. They well knew that such a Being could not be crucified, and that HE was much more out of their power than the stormy winds, or the starry heavens. When Jesus Christ tells the Jews, "I and my Father are one;" (John x. 30.) the Jews, it appears, thought that Jesus asserted his equality with God, though he only used the term one, as it is else where applied where personal identity cannot be suspected. Had he said, I and my Father are *one God*, his doctrine would have been totally different. But as the Jews were strict Unitarians, and had suffered much for their idolatry, they were ready to put him to death for claiming, as they supposed, deity, which belonged to God alone. Now, if the doctrine of the Trinity be true, I ask you, how came Jesus to contradict their wrong interpretation of his words, and rectify their opinions upon the subject? They supposed he set up to be God; and so he was, says the Trinitarian: then, my young friends, what made him contradict himself? "Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, ye are God? If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanc-

tified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the son of God?" (John x. 34.) There is no accounting for this language on Trinitarian principles, nor can all the combined ingenuity of professors and students show, why Christ, (if, in verse 30, he asserted his deity,) endeavoured here to contradict it, and acknowledged that the same God, who had sent other messengers of mercy, had sanctified him for his important office.

Dr. Dwight contends, that the Trinity consists of three infinitely perfect Beings! But he endeavours to relieve himself from the difficulty of showing how *three Beings* are only *one Being*, by arguing, that, on this subject, no man has any ideas whatsoever!

Without troubling you, at present, about any *whys* or *hows*, you had better examine your Bibles, and find out the chapter and verse which announces Trinity—three persons in the Godhead—three infinitely perfect Beings, or any such phrases, which are passed currently by Dr. Dwight and his disciples for genuine theology. It was no wonder Dr. Dwight argued, that on this subject no man has any *ideas* whatsoever, an undeniable admission that it cannot be supported by *reason*. And as the doctrine is no where to be found in *Revelation*, where did the Dr. discover it? How can any man distinguish between three infinitely perfect Beings, and three Gods? Or how is it possible that three *infinite* Beings could exist? One infinite, a mathematician would say, demonstrates that there cannot be two. If two, why not three? and if three, why not four? and so on. But when the *fact* is revealed, that there are three infinitely perfect Beings, it will be time enough to argue *how* it is possible. Such theories distract the mind in religious worship, contradict the plainest expressions of divine revelation, excite prejudices against the Gospel, and are calculated to mislead the young student.

Without here farther reasoning on Dr. Dwight's system, I shall briefly lay before you a few of his assertions, and a few of the declarations of Jesus Christ, that you may compare the theology of the Dr. with that of the author and finisher of the Christian's faith.

Dr. Dwight says of Christ—"He always taught in his own name; even when altering and annulling the ac-

knowledge word of God. In every part of this employment, he taught in his own name."

Christ says—"I am come IN MY FATHER'S NAME. John v. 43. Jesus answered them—My doctrine is NOT MINE, BUT HIS THAT SENT ME. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be OF GOD, or whether I speak OF MYSELF." John vii. 16, 17.

Dr. Dwight says of Christ—"NOT ONCE does he say, thus saith the Lord, during his ministry; nor teach with any authority except his own."

Christ says—"Then said they unto him, who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them—even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true; and I SPEAK to the world THOSE THINGS WHICH I HAVE HEARD OF HIM. They understood not that he spake to them of the FATHER. Then said Jesus unto them, when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF, but AS THE FATHER HATH TAUGHT ME, I SPEAK THESE THINGS." John viii. 25, 28. "For I HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF MYSELF: but THE FATHER WHICH SENT ME, HE GAVE ME A COMMANDMENT WHAT I SHOULD SAY, AND WHAT I SHOULD SPEAK. And I know that HIS COMMANDMENT is life everlasting: WHATSOEVER I SPEAK, therefore, EVEN AS THE FATHER SAID UNTO ME, SO I SPEAK." John xii. 49, 50.

Dr. Dwight says—"The same authority also, Christ assured and exhibited generally, when he wrought miracles; and he never makes mention of any other."

Christ says—"THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF. I CAN OF MINE OWN SELF DO NOTHING." John v. 19, 30.

"The words that I speak unto you, I SPEAK NOT OF MYSELF, but THE FATHER, that dwelleth in me, HE DOETH THE WORKS." John xiv. 10.

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, WHATSOEVER THOU WILT ASK OF GOD, GOD WILL GIVE IT THEE. Then they took the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, 'FATHER I THANK THEE THAT THOU HAST HEARD ME.' And I know that thou hearest me

always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they might believe that THOU HAST SENT ME." John xi. 21, 22, 41, 42.

A great number of passages could be adduced to the same effect, and surely you cannot but see clearly, that had Jesus Christ been speaking against the assertions of Dr. Dwight, he could not have employed more plain and powerful language. Or if you please, Dr. Dwight has flatly contradicted Jesus Christ, and has counted little on the words of the New Testament, and much on the credulity of his readers. Were you to pronounce the words of Dr. Dwight and Jesus Christ, even in a heathen assembly, ignorant of the characters and authority of the two persons, they could not but unanimously exclaim, that one of the two must be deplorably mistaken, for no ingenuity can reconcile their declarations. It is for you to consider how far you are to be influenced by a system of theology, which undeniably opposes the numerous and repeated statements of the great King and head of the church.

Take care that you do not teach for the doctrines of Christ, the commandments and the assertions of daring divines. Yours respectfully,

A BELIEVER IN CHRIST.

REVIEW.

THE LIFE OF JOHN LOCKE, WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, JOURNALS AND COMMON-PLACE BOOKS. BY LORD KING. NEW EDITION, 2 VOLS. 8vo. LONDON, 1830.

Lord King has done much good service to the cause of Truth, Liberty, and True Religion, by the publication of these volumes. They comprise a considerable portion of Locke's Correspondence, and copious extracts from his common-place books, from 1675 to 1688.

Locke lived in eventful times, and he was suited to those times. His well-known work on the Human Understanding, cleared away many of the scholastic and monkish obscurities in metaphysical science; his Letters on Toleration, given to the world at a time when

the spirit of despotism sought to gain imperial sway in the person of Charles II, convinced every candid mind of its importance and necessity; and his Treatise on Government, prepared the way for a more impartial and just system of Policy, on the accession of the House of Orange to these realms.

These works have obtained the unanimous approbation of all countries, but it is not on their merits that Locke now comes before us. We have him here in his closet; his private thoughts and meditations are exposed to us. In works like those enumerated above, care must be taken to make them complete, lest they be open to the hostility of captious and disingenuous enemies; but in his letters and memoranda, we have his private thoughts, some crude and unfinished, others, highly wrought and perfect, expressed in plain, unambitious language.

The wish is natural, to see a man in the friendly circle, whose works have informed and delighted us, exempted from the austerity of the world, and pouring out the riches and happiness of his mind to those around.

Locke was well qualified to please. Many, who, from his writings, thought him an austere and severe man, were surprised to find him of a happy joyous temper; well-bred, and perfectly conversant with the courtesies of life. We see these fully shown in his private letters. In conversation, Locke had the peculiar art of suiting his thoughts and language to those around him, and he brought his mighty mind to the consideration of matters of, apparently, trifling import. This is the true art of conversation, and arose in him from purity and honesty of heart. But the simplicity of Locke's mind was its chief characteristic.

The dogmas of the schools had then great influence and extent; the language was peculiar and forced, and learning was not considered learning, unless clothed in confused, multifarious, and obsolete terms. Locke's language was plain and homely; his ideas sprung from the subject directly, and he sought not to imitate the example of those, who make a show of explaining, while, in reality, they only "darken counsel by words without knowledge." This character for simplicity in metaphysical science, is of great value;—joined to the love of truth, in the mind of Locke, it brought forth mighty thoughts.

in plain and simple language, but in the examination of the Sacred Scriptures, it is the one only thing needful. Of Truth Locke thus writes :—

“It is a duty we owe to God as the fountain and author of all truth, who is truth itself: and it is a duty also we owe ourselves, if we will deal candidly and sincerely with our own souls, to have our minds constantly disposed to entertain and receive the truth where-soever we meet it, or under whatsoever appearance of plain or ordinary, strange, new, or perhaps displeasing, it may come in our way. Truth is the proper object, the proper riches and furniture of the mind, and according as his stock of this is, so is the difference and value of one man above another. He that fills his head with vain notions and false opinions, may have his mind perhaps puffed up and seemingly much enlarged, but in truth it is narrow and empty; for all that it comprehends, all that it contains, amounts to nothing, or less than nothing; for falsehood is below ignorance, and a lie worse than nothing.

“Our first and great duty then is, to bring to our studies and to our enquiries after knowledge, a mind covetous of truth: that seeks after nothing else, and after that impartially, and embraces it, how poor, how contemptible, how unfashionable soever it may seem. This is that which all studious men profess to do, and yet it is that where I think very many miscarry. Who is there almost that has not opinions planted in him by education, time out of mind; which, by that means, come to be as the municipal laws of the country, which must not be questioned, but are then looked on with reverence, as the standards of right and wrong, truth and falsehood; when, perhaps, these so sacred opinions are but the oracles of the nursery, or the traditional grave talk of those who pretend to inform our childhood; who receive them from hand to hand without ever examining them? This is the fate of our tender age, which being thus seasoned early, it grows by continuation of time, as it were, into the very constitution of the mind, which afterwards very difficultly receives a different tincture. When we are grown up, we find the world divided into bands and companies; not only congregated under several politics and governments, but united only upon account of opinions, and in that respect combined strictly one

with another, and distinguished from others, especially in matters of religion." Vol i. 187-189.

And again—

"A mistake is not the less so, and will never grow into a truth, because we have believed it a long time, though perhaps it be the harder to part with; and an error is not the less dangerous, nor the less contrary to truth, because it is cried up and had in veneration by any party, though it is likely we shall be the less disposed to think so. Here, therefore, we have need of all our force, of all our sincerity; and here it is we have use of the assistance of a serious and sober friend, who may help us sedately to examine these our received and beloved opinions; for the mind by itself being prepossessed with them, cannot so easily question, look round, and argue against them. They are the darlings of our minds, and it is as hard to find fault with them, as for a man in love to dislike his mistress: there is need, therefore, of the assistance of another, at least it is very useful impartially to show us their defects, and help us to try them by the plain and evident principle of reason or religion." Vol. i. 192-193.

Such are the opinions of this true philosopher, on a matter of so much value, and he acted up to this standard. In fine, he was deeply learned without pedantry; wise, without ostentation; and good and charitable without boasting. But it is in neither of these characters that we have at present to do with him: it is as a *religious* character. Locke was an Unitarian. He thought for himself on the great truths of revelation, and casting off his prejudices, even in an age of prejudice, he sat down to an impartial and critical examination of the Sacred Scriptures. No wonder, therefore, that he renounced, among other errors, the popular doctrines of the Trinity and atonement; no wonder that he should encourage others to examine as he did; as, on being asked by a young man what was the shortest and surest way for a person to obtain a true knowledge of the Christian Religion? he said, 'Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. *It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.*'

Lord King thus writes:—

"The religious opinions of this great man, will be best

collected from his own writings: to an ardent piety, and a firm belief in the religion he professed, was joined a truly christian charity for all those who differed in opinion from him. The religion of Locke was that revealed in the Scriptures, which, in his opinion, was the most reasonable religion in the world. * * * * Reason was his guide and rule in every thing; toleration was his text; and he abhorred those only who pervert that divine precept, which teaches—to promote peace on earth and good will towards man. Those who rely on his authority and make use of his name, would do well to consider what manner of Christian he was; and when they bid others believe because he believed, let them also teach as he taught, and practise those virtues which as he practised.” Vol. ii. 62.

Of this latter passage we shall have a few words to say presently.

It was towards the close of his life, that Locke gave himself up to the exclusive study of the Sacred Scriptures in their original languages. Being subject to a complaint in his chest, he retired to Oates in Essex, on which, Dr. Watts writes—

“ And must the man of wondrous mind,
Now his rich thoughts are just refined,
Forsake our longing eyes?
Reason at length submits to wear
The wings of Faith; and lo! they rear
Her chariot high, and nobly bear
Her Prophet to the skies.”

Lord King, has given a list of subjects which appear in Locke's papers on religion. The two that follow, he says, “ may be considered as indications of his opinions.” The subjects that remain unpublished are:—

Anima humana materialis.	Anima humana non materialis.
Spiritus Sanctus Deus.	Spiritus Sanctus non Deus.
Christus merus homo.	Christus non merus homo.
Lex operum.	Lex fidei.

TRINITAS.

- I. Gen. 1. 26.
Let us.
- II. Man is become one of us.

NON TRINITAS.

- I. Because it subverteth the unity of God, introducing three Gods.
- Because it is inconsistent with the rule of prayer directed in the SS.

TRINITAS.

III. Gen. 3. 22. and 11. 6, 7. Isa. 6. 8.

NON TRINITAS.

For if God be three persons, how can we pray to him through his Son for his spirit?

The Father alone is the most high God. Luke 1. 32. 35.

There is but one first independent cause of all things, which is the most high God. Rom. 11. 36.

The Lord shall be one, and his name one. Zec. 14. 9.

The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Mark. 12. 29.

'Tis life eternal to know thee (Father,) the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17. 3.

If the Holy Spirit were God, the knowledge of him would be necessary too, to eternal life.

It is eternal life to know Christ as sent, not as eternally begotten, nor as co-essential to the Father. Biddle, 1-24. 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6.

There is one spirit manifestly distinguished from God, *i. e.* one created spirit by way of excellency; *i. e.* the Holy Spirit. There is one Lord distinguished from God, and therefore made, else there would be two unmade Lords; *i. e.* one made Lord by way of excellence, which is Jesus. Eph. 4, 4-6. Acts 2. 22, 23, 33, 36. Matt. 24. 36. Mark 13. 32. Rom. 15. 6. John 6. 27. James 3. 9. John 8. 54.

The Jews knew no God but the Father, and that was St. Paul's God.

2 Tim. 1. 3. Acts 3. 13. and 5. 30, 31, and 22. 14. Neh. 9. 6. Thou art Lord alone. "*Thou*" denoteth a single person.

Let us make man, no more proves the speaker to be more persons than

TRINITAS.

CHRISTUS DEUS SUPRE-
MUS.*Christ the supreme God.*

I. If Christ were not God, he could not satisfy for our sins.

II. He is called the mighty God. Isa. 9. 6.

III. Rom. 9. 5.

ὡς πρὸς πάντων θεός
εὐλογεῖται εἰς τοὺς
αἰῶνας

NON TRINITAS.

one, than the like form, Mark 4. 30 ; John 3. 2 ; 2 Cor. 10. 1, 2.

This, if any thing, proves only that there was some other person with God whom he employed, as in the creation of other things, so of man, viz. the spirit, ver. 2 ; Psl. 104. 30 ; Job 26. 13. and 33. 4.

Gen. 33. 22. This was spoken also to the Holy Spirit, as also that, Gen. 11. 6, 7 ; Isa. 6. 8.

CHRISTUS NON DEUS SUPRE-
MUS.*Christ not the supreme God.*

Because we are to honor him, for that the Father hath committed all judgment to him. John 5. 22, 23. But the highest is to be honored with the highest honor for himself, and for no other reason but his own sake.

Because the love to the Father is made the ground and reason of love to the Son. 1 John 5. 1. He is the Son of the most High. Luke 1. 32. and thereby distinguished from the most High. The Father is greater than he. John 14. 28.

Phil. 2. 5-8 ; v. Biddle, 5-24, nobody can be equal with himself ; equality is always between two. ib.

1 Cor. 8. 6. By whom are all things, i.e. pertaining to our salvation, ib. 7. God has made him Lord, Acts 2. 39 ; Phil. 2. 9, 10.

The glory and thanks which we give to Christ, and the faith and hope which we place in him, do not rest in him, but through him tend to God the Father, Phil. 2. 9, 10 ; 1 Pet. 1. 21 ; John 12. 44 ; Rom. 1. 8, and 16. 27 ; and therefore, he is not equal to God. He shall deliver up the kingdom, and be sub-

CHRISTUS DEUS SUPRE-
 MUS.
Christ the supreme God.

CHRISTUS NON DEUS SUPRE-
 MUS.

Christ not the supreme God.

ject to the Father. 1 Cor. 15, 24, 25, 28. And he shall be subject according to his human nature. Rev. 1. This distinction is not to be found in God's word. 2. It begs the question; for it supposes two natures in Christ, which is the thing in question. 3. It makes two persons in Christ; for he is to be subject who ruled and subdued, *i. e.* that is a person, for no other can be a king; and therefore they must grant that the person of Christ, which they hold to be a Person of supreme Deity, delivereth up his kingdom, and becomes subject, or that his human nature is a person. The latter of these subverts the Trinitarian doctrine, the former itself, *ib.* 7. 4. It is said the Son himself shall be subject: but how can the Son himself become subject, if only a human nature, added to the Son, is subjected, and not the very person of the Son? Biddle 8-24. God has exalted him and made him Lord, Phil. 2. 9. 11, and raised him from the dead. Rom. 10. 9. and 4. 24.

If the eternal Son of God co-equal and co-essential with the Father, were conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, how said the angel to Joseph, that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit? Matt. 1. 20. Biddle 11-24. Luke 1. 35. Acts 10. 38. Luke 22. 48. Matt. 27. 46.

1. How can God satisfy God? If one person satisfies another, then he that satisfies is still unsatisfied,

CHRISTUS DEUS SUPRE-
MUS.*Christ the supreme God.*

CHRISTUS NON DEUS SUPREMUS.

Christ not the supreme God.

or forgives. Ib. 12. John 20. 17. Eph. 1. 7. Heb. 1. 8. 9.

2. A mighty God ; for in the Heb. El Gibber, not Hael Haggibbor, as the Lord of Hosts is called, Jer. 32. 18. Besides the words in the close of ver. 9. distinguish Christ from the Lord of Hosts, making his God-head depend on the bounty of the Lord of Hosts. Biddle, 15-24.

3. A God over all, for *θεος* there, is without an article, and so signifies not the supreme Deity. 2 vol. 187-194.

On such grounds were the religious opinions of this great man founded. We see him applying the force of his mighty mind to the examination of the sacred Scriptures, and a study more worthy our highest attainments, our most ardent exertions, there cannot be.

After diligent research, and close examination of Scripture by Scripture, he gave up the erroneous doctrines of the Trinity and atonement. Similar enquiry should be the endeavour of every honest mind—casting off with boldness the prejudices that enwrap us, we should, individually, examine the sacred records. No one can now, with impunity, deny us John Locke as one of the most sincere of Unitarians. Yet should we not use his name as evidence of the truth of our doctrines. Even Locke's opinions should not be the rule of ours. Authority has no weight in this matter. Religion is a *personal* thing. We fix our faith neither on the profession of a Locke, nor a Milton, nor a Newton; although these are some of Britain's first-rate sons—they are of earth's purest mould, they are names that shall endure, while the Earth endures; and it is a proud satisfaction to us, holding the same views of divine truth, to rank these among our first worthies—but we believe in a greater, a more mighty revealer of truth, a more pure and spotless example.

We regret that Lord King has not given us the other

religious arguments he notices, but trust he will do so in the next edition. Another subject of great importance, he despatches in a summary way also, by the following remark:—"The argument is continued at great length with the intent of reconciling worldly business and devotion." (Vol. 1, 216.)

We lament this, for it is a subject of much consequence; it is one much neglected. Religion is considered too much "a thing apart," when it should rule and govern every action of our lives—it should influence every thought of our hearts—it should be carried with us into the business and activity of the world, and happy would it be, had "the still small voice," which it utters, even in the busiest time, been more attended to. The subject is worthy the mind of Locke.

We have already exceeded our limits; yet there are very many points untouched, and many passages we should wish to set before our readers. At a future time, we hope, to extract some passages from these very interesting volumes. But we would recommend the perusal of the books themselves, to our readers. There are many thoughts on politics, history, education, &c., which the limited nature of our work prevents our giving, but which are well deserving particular attention.

Were Locke's works more generally studied, many erroneous opinions would be corrected, and many false notions would disappear. The perusal would fit men's minds for a more pure, and just system of morals, and government, and lead the way as his motto expresses, to "absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty!"

C. K.

ON EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—About two and twenty years ago there was a work published in five parts, entitled, "Hints to the Public and the Legislature on the Nature and Effect of Evangelical Preaching, by a Barrister." This barrister is stated on the authority of Dr. Parr, to be Mr. Sedgwick; and I observed lately an advertisement in

some of the English papers, of a new edition, which is a proof of demand for the work. It is a manly, forcible, and able exposure of the evil tendency of that stile of preaching and writing, that has usurped the name Evangelical. Its republication indicates that there is need for such exposure in England, and I think some extracts may be useful to your periodical; of these therefore, I send you a few. You have hitherto been sparing of extracts, but I think that where they are taken from works out of print, or that cannot come into the hands of your readers, you cannot be better employed than in giving circulation to valuable sentiments in the words of able writers, who wrote out of the immediate vortex of passion, whim and caprice, in which we are now whirling round and round, with such velocity.

I remain &c.

ECLECTICUS.

“The true meaning of being ‘born again,’ in the sense in which our Saviour uses the phrase, implies nothing more or less in plain terms, than this:—to repent; to lead for the future a religious life, instead of a life of disobedience; to believe the holy scriptures, and to pray for grace and assistance, to persevere in our obedience to the end. All this any man of common sense, might explain in a few words. But these foolish fanatics, instead of enforcing the necessity of a moral and holy life, teach their deluded hearers that virtue and morality is just worth nothing; but that the ‘new birth,’ which they preach up as a something quite distinct from it, is *all in all*. So that they go on in their sin waiting for a ‘new birth,’ or a miraculous and sudden conversion, which they relate to happen in the most absurd cases and situations. There is an account, amongst many others equally absurd, of an old washerwoman having a *new birth*, while busy at the tub. The following account of it, is extracted from the Methodist Magazine for 1798, page 273.—‘The Lord ASTONISHED Sarah Roberts with his mercy, by setting her at liberty, while employed in the necessary business of washing for her family. For even while her hands were engaged in the world, her heart was given unto the Lord. She now found all the ways of religion to be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths peace. She received a clear wit-

ness that God, for Christ's sake, had *blotted out all her sins*, and *received her into his family*.'

"Could the scoffer or the infidel more effectually laugh at religion, than by forging such a ridiculous 'Tale of a Tub' as these methodist mountebanks have here recorded, as a miraculous manifestation of mercy. A washerwoman has *all her sins blotted out*, in the twinkling of an eye, and while reeking with suds, is received in the family 'of the Redeemer's kingdom!!!'

"Surely this is a most abominable profanation of all that is serious!—a most monstrous burlesque of all that is sacred! Yet such, according to the evangelists of methodism, is the new birth!!!

"In a profligate metropolis like London, which abounds with perpetual temptations to vice, to which the lower classes are perpetually exposed, it is of peculiar importance that the MORAL PRINCIPLE should be cultivated and strengthened with increasing assiduity, and that the people should be taught by their religious instructors, to view the Saviour in the true, just, and genuine light, in which the scriptures represent him, as 'the author of eternal salvation to all WHO OBEY HIM;' and not as a sacrifice by whose BLOOD the vengeance of God is appeased, and the DISOBEDIENT and SINFUL receive pardon and peace. This latter is the tenet of CALVINISM, but it makes no part of the truth of CHRISTIANITY.

"The personal ministry of our Saviour was at first confined to the Jews. His authority was not extended to the Gentiles, until after his resurrection. It was *then*, and as the reward of his obedience, that he received the additional authority of extending the blessings of grace, and the offer of salvation, to the whole human race. He thus broke down the middle wall of separation between the Jewish and Gentile worlds, united both under the same covenant of salvation, and thus extended, to all mankind, the same terms and conditions of pardon and acceptance. In this sense it is, that he is said to have brought the Gentiles nigh *by his blood*; because by *his death*, they were united under one head, and made, ON CONDITION OF THEIR OBEDIENCE TO HIS GOSPEL, equally partakers of that salvation which is its promised reward. The gospel is spoken of as a COVENANT, because its promises are made to depend on the

fulfilment of those moral duties which the commandments contain, and because the death of Christ confirmed the truth of that covenant gospel which he revealed.

“As all covenants were, under the Jewish dispensation, confirmed with the sprinkling of blood, so the death of Christ, by which he bare witness to the truth of his mission, is figuratively, and with allusion to that customary mode of confirmation, called the blood of the New Testament, and the *blood of sprinkling*.

“As the death of Christ has for its object, the salvation of all *who obey him*, and as he ‘gave himself for us, that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and purify unto himself a people zealous of *good works*,’—having died for this purpose, he is truly and justly said to have died for our SALVATION; and it is with a figure of speech equally correct, that *thus* we are said to have redemption *through his blood*.

“But that by *atoning* for their guilt, he becomes the author of *salvation* to those who *disobey* him, IS NOT TRUE.

“That he came to redeem sinners from the *punishment* of all iniquity, by suffering it in their stead, IS NOT TRUE.

“That he gave himself for those who were not zealous of *good works*, IS NOT TRUE.

“That when he shall come to judge the earth, he will *impute* his righteousness to the wicked, IS NOT TRUE.

“That *they* will benefit by his DEATH, who never benefited by his LIFE,—that those whom the promises of the gospel could never stimulate to holiness, will receive, through his *blood*, the reward promised only to the practice of virtue,—THIS IS NOT TRUE. And such doctrines, either in the metropolis or elsewhere, it is neither wise to teach, nor safe to learn.

“With respect to the phrase of ‘the blood of Christ,’—a phrase sacred in the mouth of all rational Christians, and which ought never to be used on slight occasions—these Fanatics repeat it with a frequency that is surfeiting, and associate it with a familiarity that is ludicrous. I will present the reader with one example among an endless variety, from the EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE for December last. They were among the last words of a *reverend* Methodist, whose life, character, and behaviour, is duly recorded in that marvelous Chronicle of saints,

“—Sunday, the 24th. On a friend saying, ‘Take a drop of wine into your dear mouth;’ he replied, ‘It is a dear mouth, for it was purchased with *precious BLOOD*.’”

“Surely such language comes much nearer to the irony of an infidel, than the piety of a *divine*?

“When our Saviour sent forth his disciples, he commanded them to ‘go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ This *exhortation* is thus singularly *paraphrased* by one whom Dr. Hawker denominates a *sweet writer*.

“—Tell them that I will be their shepherd still, though they despised my tears, and spilled my blood. Tell them that for their sakes I shed both. Let them know that I live, and *because I live*, my death shall not be their damnation, nor my murder an unpardonable sin, but tell them that *the blood of Jesus cleans from ALL sin*, EVEN THAT SIN BY WHICH THAT BLOOD WAS SHED. And do you let them know that you have seen the prints of the nails upon my hands and feet, and the wound of the spear in my side, and that *those marks of their cruelty*, so far from giving me vindictive thoughts, THAT EVERY WOUND THEY HAVE GIVEN ME, SPEAKS IN THEIR BEHALF, PLEADS WITH MY FATHER FOR THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS, and ENABLES ME to bestow it; and by these sufferings, which they may be ready to think have exasperated me against them BY THESE VERY WOUNDS, do persuade them to receive the salvation THEY *have procured*. Nay, if you meet that poor wretch that thrust the spear into my side, tell him that there is another and a better way of *coming at my heart*, even my heart’s love, that they may look on him whom he hath pierced and mourn. I will cherish him in that very bosom he hath wounded, and he shall *find the blood he shed*, AN AMPLE ATONEMENT FOR THE SIN OF SHEDDING IT. And add moreover from me, that his refusal now will put me to more pain and displeasure, in rejecting again salvation through my blood, than when his spear first drew it forth.’

“Having thus quoted THIS MOST EXTRAORDINARY PARAPHRASE, the doctor subjoins the following comment:—‘How *irresistible appears the argument*, and how ought it, my brother, to operate upon you? Did the kind Jesus mean all this, AND MORE, when he commanded salvation to be first preached in Jerusalem, and will he refuse your cry for that salvation, when by his gracious

command, it is thus brought here and offered to you? Were THE VERY MURDERERS OF OUR LORD made partakers of this great salvation, and shall it be withholden from you? *How irreconcilable this to our ideas?*

“The term ‘blood,’ and the phrase ‘blood of sprinkling,’ is not only bandied about by these sectaries with the most vulgar and irreverent familiarity, but it is even used by way of giving a zest to the fiercest deprecations of divine vengeance, against those who differ from them in religious opinions.

“‘O might the blood of sprinkling cry
For those who spurn the sprinkled blood,
Assert thy glorious Deity!
Stretch out thy arm, thou TRIUNE GOD,
The UNITARIAN fiend expel,
And chase his doctrine back to hell.’

“This forms part of a *hymn*!! Such are the pious strains in which they offer up their prayer *against all persecution*!!—It is thus they warble forth the mild melodies of methodism in their Holy Tabernacles! Pious saints, and pure, it is thus they chaunt forth their *evangelical* petitions to the God of love and mercy!!!

“This is but the symphony of this spiritual BAND—it is but the *prelude* with which they ‘awake their lute and harp.’ But it discovers their spirit, and may serve to put us on our guard. THEY THEMSELVES ‘will awake *right early*.’

“This strain of *doctrinal* poetry deserves a remark that ought not to escape us. If any man assume the name of a particular leader, he is presumed to adopt his religious opinions, and you are justified in imputing to him the whole of the doctrines, whatever they may be, that are held and taught by the teacher to whom he thus avowedly attaches himself. Thus, if any one choose to rank himself among the followers of CALVIN, he may be presumed to hold all the opinions which Calvin taught.—But this does not apply with respect to any one, who attaching himself to no leader, professes to deny a particular doctrine, and to assume a denomination which shall designate his particular opinion. You cannot be justified in imputing any doctrine to such a man, but that distinct opinion which such denomination includes.—Thus if a man call himself a *Unitarian*, the disbelief of THREE GODS is all you are entitled to impute to him—the appellation imports no more than the rejection of the *Trinitarian hypothesis*.

“An UNITARIAN is he that believes in the *unity* of the divine nature; or, in other words, that there is but ONE God.

“Our Saviour most explicitly declares that there is but *one God*, and that from that one and *only* true God, he was sent to be the messenger of salvation to mankind. His words are—‘This is life eternal, to know THEE, the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ whom *thou* hast sent.’

“Our Saviour then, most clearly believed, and taught all mankind to believe, in the *unity* of the divine nature.

“To put up a prayer to the Deity, beseeching the exercise of his vengeance against ‘the *Unitarian* FIEND,” is to couch it in language in which the zealous bigot may glory, but at which the pious Christian will tremble.

“When likewise we search the gospel for our instruction on this doctrine, and find that one of the scribes came and enquired of our Saviour, ‘Which is the *first commandment* OF ALL?’

“‘And Jesus answered him, *The first commandment* OF ALL is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is ONE LORD.’

“Having here found the belief of the *unity* of the divine nature, declared by Christ himself to be among the *first commandments* of God to man, who that reflects at all can join his voice with those who thus entreat the Almighty, in language equally revengeful and profane, to

‘CHASE HIS DOCTRINE BACK TO HELL.’

“It is a most extraordinary circumstance, and it is a circumstance which deserves a peculiar and marked attention, that this new sect at the same time that they arrogate to themselves the exclusive appellation of *Gospel* Ministers, and *Evangelical* Preachers, neither deduce their doctrines from the *gospel* nor from the *evangelists*, but passing over both with silent indifference, they refer to the most abstruse passages of the letters of St. Paul, and to certain writers of the Old Testament.—The gospel, as recorded by the four evangelists, they scarcely deign to notice; you never find the parables, which our Saviour employed to illustrate *his* doctrines, even made the text of a sermon in which *theirs* are insisted upon. And this for the plainest of all reasons:—The moral truths inculcated in the instructive parables delivered by our Saviour himself, are so glaringly subversive of the whole of *their* system of *faith*,

that they always keep them out of sight. Disconnected phrases are quoted from the epistles, while the plain language of our Saviour, and the doctrines of *his* gospel, are thrown completely into the back-ground. With the cant of holiness upon their lips, they pretend to 'preach CHRIST and him crucified,' while all the time they are preaching PAUL and him *perverted*."

EXERTIONS FOR THE DIFFUSION OF TRUTH
RECOMMENDED. A SERMON, &c.,
By DAVID DAVIDSON, A.M.

OF this excellent Sermon we can take no further notice at present, than give a short extract, as a sample of its style and sentiment, because we have been led by the value of the articles transmitted, to bestow more of our pages upon quotations from others—to the exclusion of original matter, than we usually do.

"It is no very long period since the doctrine of the *Divine Unity* first began to be openly alleged and publicly vindicated, even in this land of free inquiry. Its believers are but a few years delivered from the terrors of an anti-christian law which decreed pains and penalties against those who would venture to impugn the Athanasian creed.—It is scarcely yet free from the fanatical persecution of undistinguishing bigots. The whole hierarchy of the Establishment with all its multifarious defendants, carries on a relentless war against its humble professors; and yet all have proved unable to repress its rising energies, and to prevent its extensive diffusion. Nay, it has found in the very ranks of its opponents men who have been its secret approvers, whose understandings excelled their honesty; and some whose understandings appreciated the simplicity of truth, and whose sense of honesty and religion prompted them to relinquish their endowments and their influence, and become open, avowed, and fearless defenders of the doctrine.

"Notwithstanding the reiterated assertions of its opponents, I do not believe it to be a fact, that the professors of this primary doctrine—this foundation of religion—this important, indisputable truth—the unity of the Almighty, have decreased, but on the contrary that they have become more numerous, that it is daily

causing defections in the ranks of its opponents, and is embraced by multitudes within the pale of the Established Churches of the kingdom, who have not the moral courage to come out and be separate, who still cling to some of the honours and forms of a system, which, in their conscience they do not approve. The very bitterness of the hostility which is directed against the doctrine of the Divine Unity and its professors, is an evident though indirect declaration of their sense of its power—of their alarm at its prevalence—and their fear of its effects upon those antiquated and exploded forms to which they are bound by the ties of prejudice and interest. Let me not be understood to call in question the Christian sincerity of all the opponents of our views of divine truth. I am persuaded very many of them speak in the earnestness of their hearts. I do not deprecate argument and inquiry; honest opponents are at all times the best friends of truth; they show the untenable nature of the ground which they occupy, and give those of the contrary part an opportunity to meet them in the open field of discussion, where truth will finally prevail. But I do deprecate the meanness—the malignity of misrepresentation and artifice. I deprecate what can be defended on no better principle than that of doing evil that good may come; I deprecate an appeal to ignorance and prejudice; I deprecate the plan of throwing into the scale questions foreign to the argument, and thus endeavouring to terrify society from a cool, dispassionate review of a question of incomparable importance to every reasonable being.

I think I do not overstate the amount of the argument when I affirm the Unity of the Great First Cause, the Maker and moral governor of the world, to be the declaration of *nature*—the clear deduction of *reason* from a survey of the works of creation and providence—and the unequivocal doctrine of the Jewish Scriptures; universally believed by the Jews, and repeated with such frequency and with so much solemnity in their sacred writings, that there is evidence of a design to guard against the possible misconception or misrepresentation of this fundamental truth. And does not Christianity correspond with the teaching of reason and the language of previous revelation? Or does God depart from the declarations of truth previously deliver-

ed and ratified? Does he in the New Testament, introduce a new dogma with respect to his nature and perfections, which are immutable and eternal? Nay, I think no declarations can be clearer than those of the Gospel on this subject. It expressly quotes and confirms this assertion of the Jewish Scriptures, "The Lord our God is one Lord." Our Saviour and his apostles uniformly affirm the supreme and sole Deity of the Father.

God forbid that we should be so hazardous or wicked as lightly to esteem the rock of our salvation, or, according to the malicious language of our adversaries, "deny our Saviour." But God forbid, too, that we should encroach on the prerogative of the Almighty; that we should weaken the moral beauty of his perfections; that we should attribute less to God and more to our Saviour, than our Saviour alleges is due to the one and claims for the other. But what is the language of the majority of Christians on the subject of this doctrine as regards the New Testament Scriptures? Do they affirm that it plainly teaches the creed of Athanasius? Do they affirm that it declares that "the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but one"? and that these are "the same in substance, equal in power and glory"? No, our opponents do not tell us it is thus; they affirm that these are matters of *inference*, deducible from separate and distinct passages, and resulting from a combined view of the whole system of Christianity; they would persuade us that this doctrine, unknown to the patriarchal age—unknown to the Jewish Scriptures,—repudiated by reason and common sense,—they would persuade us this doctrine, so strange as they admit it to be, and so important as they believe it, is to be gathered from the Christian Scriptures only as a deduction from certain criticisms, comparisons and analogies. This is a degree of boldness in assertion and inconsistency in reasoning which must be obvious to impartial minds.

But I may go still further than this; the majority of Christians who profess to hold the dogma of the Trinity in Unity, admit that this is a doctrine neither of *direct revelation*, nor yet of *certain inference* from Scripture, but rests for its stability upon the *decisions of the Church of Christ*, which in its wisdom and by its authority has declared it to be apostolic and true. And is this doc-

trine of inference and tradition to be placed in opposition to the whole spirit and tenor of revelation? Is reason to be outraged, and common sense set at defiance, that the remnant of the Platonic philosophy, the idol of Athanasius, may be engrafted upon the purity and simplicity of the Christian system?

[*The Report of the London Unitarian Association, came too late for insertion in full in our present Number; but we give a brief abstract, rather than keep from our Readers an entire month, the interesting information it contains,—especially concerning that most illustrious stranger, Rammohun Roy.*]

LONDON UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

RAMMOHUN ROY.

THE Annual Meeting of the Subscribers and Friends of this Society was held May 25th, at the Chapel, South-place, Finsbury. The assembly was numerous and most respectable, a large portion of the auditory consisting of ladies.

The Rev. Mr. APSLAND took the Chair. He congratulated the Meeting on the improved state of the Society, and referred to its first institution, twenty-five years ago. From time to time they had appealed to the people, and their appeals, like that which had lately been made to the nation, had been well and nobly responded to, [great applause]. It was true, indeed, that they had not succeeded in converting whole towns and counties; it was true they had not put down all bigotry and intolerance throughout the land; but it was also true, that they had at least taken the sting out of the serpent [applause]; and although bigots might be still as much as ever disposed to annoy, they had now been deprived of the power. [much applause]. There was perhaps in that Chapel no person who was not aware, that at a late Meeting, composed of all ranks and denominations of Christians, the Unitarians were put upon their trial, the question being discussed whether or not they were such Christians as it became the Orthodox to admit of their co-operation. He was happy to say, that without any effort on the part of the Unitarians themselves, the decision of Churchmen and Dissenters was, that the principle of the Unitarians—that is, the recognition of the Holy Scriptures as their rule of faith—was a Christian principle, and that, therefore, they were to be regarded as Christians, with whom the Orthodox might shake hands [applause.] They had

the happiness to see in that room, in the morning, the distinguished man who had risen like the Star of the East, and had diffused light among those who were sitting in the darkness of the shadow of death [applause]. That illustrious man had worked himself out of the darkness of Heathenism into Deism, and from Deism into Unitarian Christianity [applause.] He (the Chairman) was glad to find that the excellent Rajah considered himself amongst them as associated with the most intelligent and stirring sect in the whole world. He (Mr. Aspland) believed that they should presently hear from that distinguished person's own lips his unsophisticated feelings with regard to their cause, which he called the old and the pure Christian faith [great applause].

Mr. Mardon then read the Report of the Committee; which showed that great activity had been exerted in their cause during the last year, and had been attended with great success, not only in Great Britain and Ireland, but in many parts of Continental Europe, and of America, and also in India. It gave assurance that still greater success might well be anticipated for the next year. The Committee also explained in the Report, that they had admitted the Rajah Ram Mohun Roy an honorary member of the Association, [applause] and that, in doing so, they had availed themselves of their privilege for the second time only since their appointment.

The Rev. Thomas Madge rose to propose a vote of thanks to the Rev. Mr. Hutton, for the excellent sermon which he had that morning preached to the Society, [much applause.] In doing so, he would remind the Meeting, that although the ultimate success of the great cause of truth was certain, yet it must be effected by human instrumentality. They should, therefore, not abate their exertions. He should also allude to the objection which had been raised to the denomination of the Association, as being of an exclusive and party character. He denied that assertion. The appellation, Unitarian Christian, was most comprehensive. It included all those who acknowledged one God and one Mediator. But that church which demanded an unqualified assent to Thirty-nine Articles, each of them containing, perhaps, thirty-nine distinct propositions, was really exclusive and intolerant. It had been said, that they ought to adopt no other designation than the name of Christian. Well, for his part, he wished most earnestly to see the time when the name of Unitarian would be wholly merged in that of Christian [enthusiastic applause.] He knew the time would certainly come, and he would say to those who made those objections, the sooner that time comes the better [applause.] That would be, indeed, the Euthanasia of the Association [loud and continued applause.] Under the present circumstances of society—when man was erecting reason as the tribunal by which the justice of laws and the fitness of legislators, the doctrines of priests and the authority of kings should be judged—he could not believe that that church could long prevail which excluded its members from the exercise of reason [applause]. If the authority of high names could confer honour upon a cause, or give it suc-

cess, then no cause could derive more powerful aid from that source than Unitarian Christianity. They could boast of those men who first died for the love of Christ [applause.] In this land itself they could boast of Milton, Newton, and Locke. He congratulated the Society on the altered state of Unitarianism, within the last 40 or 50 years, in all parts of the world. Even Geneva, the scene as well of the glorious struggles of Calvin in the cause of truth and toleration, as of his cruel persecution of the Unitarian Reformer, Servetus, was quitting the faith of her fathers, and adopting pure Christianity. In this country, also, great as were the difficulties to be overcome, the cause was making way—much, openly and visibly, but still more, secretly and silently. He concluded by moving “the thanks of the Association to the Rev. Mr. Hutton.”

Mr. Hutton rose to express his grateful sense of the high honor conferred on him by the vote. He stood before the Society, not as a man having any claims to gratitude from them, but as one who was deeply their debtor. It was by the tracts of that Society, disseminated through the North of Ireland, of which he was a native, that he had been enabled to emancipate himself from the despotism of the creed in which he was educated. He was an enemy to monopoly in every shape, on earth or in heaven [a laugh], and he therefore would not monopolise the time of the Meeting further than to declare, that he owed every blessing which he possessed, to his instruction in Unitarian principles [applause].

Dr. Bowring said, the Committee had done him the signal honour of depositing in his hands a Resolution, welcoming their illustrious Eastern Friend, and informing him of all that they felt and hoped from his advent amongst them. He, (Dr. B.) remembered to have somewhere met with the inquiry, What would be our sensations if we should find ourselves in the presence of those time-honoured men whom history records as the instructors of mankind? He had often reflected upon the feelings of those men, who first traversing the southern seas, beheld that beautiful constellation, the Golden Cross, and he believed that such were the sensations with which he stretched forth his hand to welcome the illustrious Rajah Ram Mohun Roy (long continued applause.) Distance had something of the effect of time, and we were apt to regard with almost similar sensations the presence of a man whom half the earth had separated from us, to those with which we should meet one whom time had separated from us by a thousand years. The heroism of the Rajah in the cause of true religion, was much more enterprising and disinterested than Europeans could readily suppose. When Peter the Great descended from the Throne, and retired to learn ship-building at Saardam, he gained more honour than he had gained by all his victories. But he had no prejudices to encounter, and no sacrifices to make. He had himself formed the opinions by which his conduct was to be judged. But their illustrious guest had overcome all the prejudices of caste and education, and foregone the highest honours of

the Brachmin race, to labour in the cause of truth [applause]. Time would fail, if he, (Dr. B.) should attempt to go through the history of his illustrious friend. If at this present moment the pile was not burning in Hindoostan, upon which some wretched victim was to be sacrificed to a barbarous superstition, it was to the exertions of that Rajah the prevention of the sacrifice was to be attributed [immense applause]. When, therefore, he came amongst them, they could not refrain from expressing to him the delight with which they had marked his onward course, and their reverential gratitude for the services he had rendered to the cause of truth, and their ardent wishes to promote the objects of his journey [applause].

The Resolution, expressing the gratification with which the Society saw the Rajah amongst them, and their anxiety for the cause of Religious Reform in India, being seconded by Dr. KIRKLAND, of Boston, in the United States of America, was passed with enthusiastic applause.

The Rajah Ram Mohun Roy (who seemed to labour under indisposition, and was heard with difficulty), said that he had been too unwell and too much exhausted, to take an active part in the business of the day. He was much indebted to Dr. Kirkland, to his friend Dr. Bowring, and to the Society, for the honour they had done him in calling him a fellow labourer, and in admitting him to their Association as a brother. But he was not aware of what he had done for the cause of truth, which should give him a claim to their thanks. Whatever he had done was for his own salvation. He believed in the doctrines of Christianity; but he was not conscious of having done any thing to merit the gratitude and praise of that Meeting. If he had done any thing, it must be very trifling. The Hindoos and Brahmins, to whom he was related, were all opposed to the doctrines which he advocated. But Christians in India were more hostile to his principles and those of the Society, even than Hindoos and Brahmins; and he found still greater hostility amongst Christians in this country. They abhor Unitarianism and simple truth, because they love mystery, and are pleased with mystical forms of religious worship. If, however, the system of the Unitarians be true, it will infallibly prevail; for truth always prevails, notwithstanding the opposition which it meets with. The Unitarians' system, seemed to him to be simple, and to have common sense on its side. They had reason, Scripture and common sense in their favour; but wealth, power and prejudice, were struggling with those other three [great applause]. He believed, however, that the success of their (the Society's) cause, with the advancement of knowledge, was certain. He would conclude, by assuring them, that he should never forget the honours which they had from time to time conferred on him.—[The speech of the learned Rajah was frequently interrupted by applause, and its conclusion was followed by very great cheering].

Intelligence.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim, on 24th of January, 1851, Dr. Bruce asked permission to retire on the bounty, being by age and infirmity rendered incapable of satisfactorily discharging the active duties of the pastoral office. A committee of the Presbytery were appointed to prepare an address to Dr. Bruce, on the occasion of his resigning his pastoral charge, and at the succeeding meeting of the Presbytery in Downpatrick, the following address was read from the pulpit, by the Rev. W. Herron, of Ballyclare, moderator:—

TO THE REV. WM. BRUCE, D.D. SENIOR MINISTER OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, IN BELFAST.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Upwards of fifty years, spent in the zealous and indefatigable discharge of all the duties of the Christian Ministry, having at length brought about the period, when the course of nature renders it necessary for you to retire from the more active duties of your office, we your co-Presbyters, cannot withhold our assent to the desire which you have expressed, of having an assistant and successor appointed by your congregation.

“While we thus bow with submission to the order of Divine Providence, we feel it incumbent upon us at the same time, to express our strongest assurance of the veneration due to your character, and to the dignity with which you have adorned your profession, and our sense of the important services which you have rendered to the cause of truth and religion, both in public and private, from the pulpit and from the press. You, sir, have eminently supported the character of an illustrious and long-continued succession of forefathers in the Christian church: you have lived, yourself, in eventful times; and have been occasionally placed in trying situations. But, through all, you have carried yourself with that personal firmness, public consistency, and ministerial faithfulness, which have made the hoary head to you indeed a crown of glory.

“Under the dispensation of that wise and benevolent Being, who maketh all things to work together for good to them that fear and love him, you have been spared to see those great gospel truths, which you have always so ably advocated, embraced, avowed, and defended by a larger and more respectable portion of the Presbyterian community, than you had probably at any time anticipated: and it must be truly gratifying to your feelings, to know that of these you carry with you into your retirement, the undivided attachment and esteem.

“We cannot conclude without testifying the warm regard and affection which we entertain towards yourself personally, and our grateful sense of the pleasure and improvement which we have at all times derived from your society and fellowship.

“That the evening of your days may pass on calm and unclouded, in the happiness of your domestic circle, and under the consolations of religion; that your last moments may be cheered by the pros-

pects and hopes which support the pious servants of God ; and that, finally, as a good and faithful shepherd, you may enter into the joys of your Lord, is the sincere and fervent prayer of, Rev. and dear Sir, your affectionate friends and brethren."

Dr. Bruce replied extempore, so that we cannot give his exact words, but the purport of his reply was—"That, though from the kindness of his brethren, and the strength of his own claims, he could not have doubted of their compliance, he was deeply affected with gratitude for the affectionate and respectful manner, in which they had consented to his retirement, and testified their sympathy ; and he returned his cordial thanks to the Presbytery, for the indulgence and attention which he had always experienced during a long series of years, and succession of ministers."

The subject of the recent transactions in Clough congregation, did not come regularly before the Presbytery, as the question at issue is entirely a legal one : but they were informed by the minister and elder, that a written agreement had some time since been entered into by the two parties, binding themselves not to enter the house until a legal decision should be obtained : that a warrant from a magistrate had been given to the chief constable of police to prevent any forcible entry ; that the constable had been informed by the law advisers of the crown, that such warrant could not be legally executed by him, but that if any attempt were made to interrupt the peace, he might interfere ; that on this ground he gave up his warrant, and consequently in defiance of their written agreement, Mr. Dill's party, about eleven o'clock on Saturday night, the 30th of April, broke open the door, and on Sunday morning, at four o'clock, Mr. Dill took possession of the pulpit. Mr. Watson having heard a rumor of such an attempt two days before, applied to counsel to know what was necessary to be done, and he and his friends strictly, in every particular, followed that advice ; and accordingly in order to assert their claim, demanded admittance, and endeavoured to push their way in. In this they were resisted, and maltreated by the opposite party, so that the constables had at length to clear the meeting-house of Mr. Dill and his friends, and keep the key of the house until he should receive directions how to act. In consequence of this renewal of their dissensions, the whole blame of which lies at Mr. Dill's door, a letter was received from the under secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, informing the parties that if they did not settle their disputes by arbitration or otherwise, before the first day of June, the grant from the Regium Donum Fund would be altogether withdrawn from the congregation. On receiving this, Mr. Watson's friends renewed their offer of submitting the equitable right to the house to arbitration of merchants, and also the equitable compensation to be made to the party against whom the award might be given. Whether any answer has been returned, we have not heard ; but it is obvious, that in this last, as in every other part of this business, Mr. Watson and his friends have manifested the greatest desire to avoid litigation, and to obtain an equitable adjustment of their respective claims.

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A LETTER TO A LITERARY LADY.

DEAR MADAM,—Feeling an utter abhorrence of disputing with ladies, and an equal unwillingness to be thought indifferent to any subject, in which they take an interest or find amusement, I prefer this mode of conveying my thoughts on our late conversation to personal argument or an appearance of apathy and neglect.

I congratulate Mr. Ferrie on his good fortune in collecting a numerous class of intelligent ladies, who not only paid a regular attendance on his lectures, and took notes of what they heard, but purchased and studied the books which he recommended, and produced essays which excited the admiration of the professor and their fellow-students, and in which they freely canvassed some of his favourite opinions.

It is highly creditable to Mr. Ferrie and the ladies, that he has been able to create an interest in a study so little valued by men. When, indeed, he succeeded to his office, and was persecuted by an odious faction, some gentlemen came forward with subscriptions, and gave an occasional attendance; but I have not heard, that he kindled a spark of enthusiasm among them; and I doubt, whether he was favoured with one voluntary disciple during the last session.

He has, however, been amply consoled and gratified by the applause of an academical class of very diligent and capable young men. This he has justly merited by an uncommon display of talent, energy, and address in his introductory lecture, and in his annual examinations, which have redounded to the honour of himself, his pupils, and the institution. You know, and he may

know, that these praises are not the "kisses of an enemy." Whether they have also acquired a relish for his ideal philosophy, I have no opportunity of ascertaining; but I am aware, that this is usually the case with young men, while hearing lectures from able professors. They even contract a factious attachment to their teacher and his theory. These feelings, however, soon become evanescent. Students at college greedily swallow, but are slow of digestion. Their whole anxiety is to be well prepared for private and public examinations, to acquire reputation and gain prizes. For my own part, I never met with any individual, who addicted himself to such studies, after they ceased to be a task.

Let it not be deemed discreditable to professor Ferrie, that he has failed in inspiring the public with a love for his philosophy; for this has been a subject of mortification to greater men than he; with deference be it spoken. I heard his predecessor, the ingenious and eloquent Dr. Young, so highly valued and deeply lamented, complain, in his public lecture, of this general apathy. The elegant Dugald Stewart, so eminently qualified to adorn every science, expressed the same regret. The English periodicals bear witness, that Scotch metaphysics attract little attention in their country. An unsuccessful attempt has been lately made to introduce it through the London University, by a pupil of Dugald Stewart. It has, accordingly, been followed by a premature publication of the course. I suspect too, that, if it has gained a footing, it has made little progress on the European or American Continent. Dr. Priestly, indeed, struck up a pretty warm controversy with some Caledonian philosophers; and it is only on such occasions, that it has been able to rouse the torpid spirits of the English or Irish literati. North of the Tweed however, the ball has been kept up with great vigour; for a subject of controversy, whether metaphysical, theological, or political, has been aptly compared to a foot-ball. When you see a number of people collected, though ever so amicable and quiet, throw a foot-ball among them, and you will immediately raise an uproar. See how they kick it and cuff it, and toss it, and bandy it about. It is covered with mud and filth. No matter: they fling it in each others' faces. The passers by join

in the scuffle; till all, bedaubed with dirt, and many with broken shins, give up the sport. The foot-ball is then thrown into some obscure corner, where it lies forgotten. This is a true picture of most controversies.

It was very praise-worthy in you and your female friends to embrace an opportunity of dipping into the spring of science, and to show, that your exclusion from universities does not arise from inability or disinclination to learn. It was also very natural to your active and inquisitive minds, as well as honourable to your spirit and independence, to brave the sneers of your own companions, and some of your ignorant and envious acquaintances of our sex. I admire the wit and courage of the lady, who repelled the insolence of one of these dunces, who called the ladies *learned cats*, alluding to a show, then exhibiting in town. By this retort, "I would rather be a learned cat than a stupid dog." Within the Institution, however, they received due respect from old and young. This thirst for knowledge is very laudable, though in the present instance, I think it "the knowledge of good and evil." To this sipping of science the admonition of Pope is peculiarly applicable:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing:

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

I could rather wish, that occasions were offered, as formerly, of applying to natural history, by Dr. J. Drummond, or now by Mr. Bishop; or experimental philosophy, by professor Stevelly; or polite literature, by professor Cairns and M. Doisy, and that ladies would leave Craniologists and Pneumatologists, Fatalists and Materialists, to settle matters among themselves. Professor Dugald Stewart, though he excelled in the higher branches of intellectual philosophy, freely acknowledged, that "disquisitions either of scholastic pneumatology, or physiological metaphysics, are an idle waste of time."

Here, my dear madam, I think it prudent to premise, that I am not a metaphysician; because you will soon discover that. I also deem it fair to myself, to warn or apprise you, that my observations are not to be taken, as if they were pointed at Mr. Ferrie, for this plain reason, that I have had no opportunity to be so well

acquainted with his system as to warrant that liberty. They will refer, in general, only to the books, that have been published on this subject, as far as I am acquainted with them.

In writing on this subject, I know not what to call it. It is neither a science nor an art. A science, you know, is a system of demonstrative propositions; but here we neither have axioms, nor are the terms capable of logical definition—the simple powers of the mind being simple ideas. In the absence of axioms and definitions, however, we have abundance of postulates. An art, as you are aware, is a series of practical rules; but here we have no practical result in view. In short a science is a connected series of theorems, and an art, of problems; but in the present case I cannot find either. It may be designated a theory or speculation, but surely of a very vague character. The visionary notion of Plato, concerning ideas, amused the Heathen philosophers and Christian divines, and even tinctured the philosophy of Locke. Berkeley availed himself of it to disprove the existence of the external world, and Hume to deny the existence of spirits or minds. Their arguments were so firmly rooted in opinions universally admitted, that the philosophical world was entranced in profound scepticism. Reid broke the spell, released mankind from this delusion; and laid the foundation of philosophy on the basis of “common sense,” the constitution of man, and the will of God. Here I am inclined to stop and take up my abode. Let my soul dwell with common sense; for I foresee, that, if I follow our new guides, they will lead us back to scepticism or fatalism. Reid was supported by two excellent and able men, Beatty and Stewart. Among his opponents are Brown and Mill. Brown was the idol for a time, notwithstanding the alarm taken by the clergy, at the apparently atheistical tendency of his doctrine of cause and effect. At present, Mill appears to have gained the ascendant. Now, my dear madam, I cannot think that this ever-veering philosophy is a profitable study for desultory readers or casual hearers. Uncertainty and change, necessarily tend to beget and nourish a sceptical spirit. They are least of all, fit for popular lectures.

I have hitherto alluded only to the physiology of the mind, as it has been called, or the anatomical dissection of its powers, what is vulgarly called splitting of hairs, a favourite amusement with metaphysicians. But these frivolous speculations are made the foundation of more important conclusions, into which the student is unwarily betrayed. These philosophers teach us, explicitly or by manifest implication; that "a thinking principle" substance or being, are unphilosophical expressions; that the mind is only a bundle of qualities without any being, to which they belong; and of thoughts and feelings without any thing to think or feel; that it is destitute of instincts, active or intellectual;* and that conscience is only a mode of reasoning: that identity, and in particular personal identity, "consists only in the sameness of these properties, and the identity of the universe on the continued sameness of the laws by which it is regulated." Now it strikes me, that on these principles, if there can be thought without a thinker, there may be a creation without a Creator; that when I sin, I only make a mistake in reasoning; and that my identity and responsibility are continually fluctuating with every change of every quality of mind or body. But was not the fabulous Proteus the same identical person under all his transformations? When I give myself up to these fancies, I feel myself dwindling and melting away into one of Berkeley and Hume's non-entities. But Hume himself confessed, that his delusions lasted only while he remained in his study. When he was dressed, and powdered, had pulled down his ruffles, and cocked his hat, taken his cane, and looked in the glass, he began to doubt of his airy unsubstantial reveries; and when he walked into the street, the charm was broken, the phantoms vanished.

We are further instructed by these "modern philosophers," that we have no power over our own thoughts or actions, that our ideas are carried along by an irresistible and "indissoluble" current of *associations*; and our actions governed by *motives*, which we can neither reject, control,

* Mr. Mill, i. 290, says, that to attribute anything to Instinct, is as much as to say nothing at all; the term Instinct in all cases, being a name for nothing but our own Ignorance.

or modify. They allow us to say, that we act according to our will; but assert, that our will itself is not free. What it is, that directs all this machinery, they do not, I believe, condescend to inform us. Some have boldly avowed, that man is a machine; and truly, as a man without motives would be a fool, so one without any control over them would be an automaton. Others express this by saying, he is the creature of circumstances. Some of these plausible expressions may beguile you into conclusions, of which you are little aware, and entangle you in a net from which you may struggle in vain to extricate yourself; for all these schemes terminate in fatal necessity, let men explain them as they will in books and colleges. Whatever contrivances ingenious men may fall upon, they must, as generally understood, produce the most mischievous effects on the conduct of mankind. The leading principle is, that we have no power of originating our actions, or controlling the operations of our minds. Now from this we may conclude, that we are no more accountable for them than for those of other men, for the ideas of free agency and responsibility are naturally and necessarily associated in the human mind. It will, therefore follow, that a man's present behaviour can have no influence on his future fate; and that he need not trouble himself about the one or the other. By learning to think, that their actions are independent of their wills, or that their wills are governed by an irresistible influence, men are relieved from all sense of guilt, and fear of punishment. When convinced, that their conduct and destiny have no connexion, and are equally independent of their exertions, they must conceive, that their actions would be matters of indifference, though they were subject to their direction, and will suppress all anxiety about what they could neither foresee nor prevent.

Again, if this be the case, why are we suffered to be perplexed and distracted about the future, and to feel remorse for the past? Why do we desire to do good? why are we sorry for having done evil, and study to avoid it in time to come? In short, there is not a principle or feeling of our souls, that does not revolt against such an idea. Above all, why are we pla-

ced in a state of trial, if we have neither power to act, nor fortitude to suffer? Lastly, how completely does this doctrine confound all our notions of a future state. As it would be absurd to call this a state of trial, it would be equally so, to call the world to come a scene of retribution; for where are the good actions, for which we can merit reward, and how can the movements of a machine be deserving of punishment?

Formidable as this last principle is, there remains another of more alarming aspect; and insisted upon more plainly and earnestly. I mean the doctrine concerning cause and effect, which are said to mean no more than antecedent and consequent, the one preceding and the other following, without any other connexion or relation, agency or power.

“The word Cause means the antecedent of a Consequent, where the connexion is constant; this has been established on such perfect evidence, that it is a received principle of Philosophy.....Here we shall take the Proposition for granted.”—*Mill*.

“Causation is only a name for the order established between an Antecedent and a Consequent.”—*Mill*. i. 79. How far backward they carry this series, they seem unwilling to inform us; whether it is an eternal series, a chain, of which every link is both cause and effect; and the whole, neither; or whether there be any first cause, and what it is; where they find it, or whether there can be any.

I care not in what specious covering they wrap up these dangerous doctrines, or with what sophistry they explain them away; I say, as they appear in some of their works, they are pernicious principles, and altogether unfit for popular lectures and female hearers. How, or how far Mr. Ferrie enlarged upon them, or countenanced them, I have no means of knowing; but I have often heard you dwell with great satisfaction on the strain of piety that pervaded his lectures. Neither am I concerned or able to unravel all the perplexed and perplexing arguments, by which they are maintained. It has been justly observed, that, if in Mathematics or Natural Philosophy, a proposition be legitimately brought to an absurd consequence, or to a contradiction of a law of Nature, it is abandoned, let the arguments in its

favour be ever so plausible. The same rule holds in Metaphysics. If it were not, see into what scepticism and infidelity we may be betrayed. The ideal theory was adopted by Locke, taken for granted by Clarke and Newton, and assumed as the basis of their reasoning by Berkeley and Hume. By its means, the one demonstrated, that there was no external World, but only Visions in our Minds—Minds! says Hume, where do you find minds? You can no more prove the existence of minds than of Bodies. There is nothing but Ideal Pictures. He accordingly proceeded to demonstrate, that there was no spiritual substance in the world; I say demonstrated, for so it was; those great Metaphysicians, Clarke and Newton, could find no flaw in the argument, till Reid discovered the fallacy. Thus the greatest Metaphysicians were deceived, and the world so bewildered as to doubt their senses and existence, by legitimate reasoning from a false principle which they all admitted. Dr. Reid himself avows, “that he once believed the Doctrine of Ideas so firmly, as to embrace the whole body of Berkeley’s System; and that he never thought of calling them in question, till the publication of Hume’s *Treatise on Human Nature*. Is not this a warning against giving way to the confused logic, equally groundless and inconclusive, of three or four men of no note or distinction in the learned world? Shall we allow them to persuade us, that we can neither think nor regulate our thoughts, neither act nor govern our actions; that causes have no power, and effects are not produced by their causes? and consequently, that we cannot be accountable, either to one another, or our Maker, for thoughts, words, or deeds; or be sure that food will nourish, or fire burn? Such appear to me to be the natural consequences of these Principles; but how they can be made to assort with Moral Philosophy I have yet to learn.

It is proper here, to observe, that all these topics may, and ought to be discussed in Colleges. They are necessarily included in a Professional Education. There they may be fully explained and relieved from objections, if possible; or both sides of an argument may be stated, and students encouraged to form their own opinions. Besides, it will appear by daily examinations,

whether they understand the subject, or have taken up any misapprehensions; but these precautions cannot be taken in a popular lecture; and the casual and inattentive hearers will carry away whatever erroneous notions they may have formed. Give me leave then, to warn you against indulging in refined speculations, lest you draw error and dangerous delusion from the same well which furnishes philosophers with innocent or useful knowledge. Draw rather from "that well, which springeth up into Everlasting Life."

Now, my dear Friend, you may reasonably conclude, that you have a right to inquire into my own opinions, and I cannot deny it. I feel, then, that I am a thinking Being, and can regulate the train of my own thoughts; that I am furnished with a Body which I can use at discretion; that I am the same person to-day that I was yesterday. I believe that I am supplied with Instincts, and Instinctive Principles and Propensities; that the Instincts peculiar to man, constitute what we call Human Nature; as the nature of the inferior animals consists of their peculiar Instincts respectively, and that I am an accountable agent, being instructed by Conscience as to Right and Wrong, and bound by it to perform duties to God and Man, and to govern my conduct, so as to give offence to neither.

This is the Peculiar Instinct and the highest distinction of man. It is distinct from the Reasoning Faculty, and has happily been entitled the Moral Sense. The ideas of Right and Wrong are Eternal and Immutable, and our Creator has enabled us by this Instinct to discern the difference, and to prefer the more excellent; to approve the one and condemn the other, and to blame and despise even ourselves when we refuse or neglect to comply with this noble Instinct. The whole of this has been denied by some Neotericks; but I think I could vindicate it to your satisfaction, if the nature of this letter would admit of such an explanation; but it is high time to draw to a close. I must, however, first throw myself on your clemency and wonted good nature for I feel, that I have been engaged in an undertaking both hazardous and ungracious, knowing how much you admire Mr. Ferrie and his lectures. If your partiality has been hurt by any of my observations, I hope you will

accept of my freedom as a compliment to your temper. If they be warranted by any thing that has occurred in your studies, you cannot take offence, and may derive benefit; if they be not, "then none have I offended," and you will excuse the well-meant, but mistaken zeal of

Your sincere Friend,
and Obedient Servant,
ERASMUS.

ORIGINAL SIN.

ADAM'S offence was not as slight an offence as some suppose it to have been; for in the first place, it was a breach of God's positive commandment.

2. It was a proof of discontent, and ingratitude to his Creator and Benefactor, who had given him every boon but one.

3. It was a capricious indulgence of a groveling appetite, unworthy of a rational creature.

4. It was coveting another's property.

5. It was taking another's property.

Let it not then be deemed a slight offence, because not a breach of morality or religion; for in all the above views, it was a breach either of the one, or of the other, or of both. The religion enjoined upon man, in the infancy of human nature, in order to be suited to that infancy, consisted of rites and ceremonies and a few simple moral precepts, forbidding obvious sins, and such epicurean indulgences as the fruit of a forbidden tree; in order to enure them to abstinence from *more sinful* indulgences. But surely no man can prove either by the light of nature, or revelation, that *his* act was *our* act, or that we were guilty of the above-mentioned breaches; since we could neither have done nor sanctioned, nor consented to an act done thousands of years before we were born.

Since then there were no other accountable creatures on the earth at the time the sin was committed, except the first pair; they and none else must have committed the offence, they alone could have been conscious of it, they alone were chargeable with it, in the eye of supreme justice, and unerring wisdom.

Guilt, or a consciousness of guilt, can no more be transferred from the guilty to the innocent, than one man can suppose himself to be another man; so that I can no more suppose myself guilty of Adam's sin, than I can suppose myself to be Adam.

Indeed I am inclined to think, that the doctrine of imputable sin, like the doctrine of three Almightyies being one Almighty, is not believed, even by those that think they believe it. That another's guilt should be made mine, is not only unjust, and a charge of injustice against the sovereign disposer, but also impossible. In like manner, I can neither believe in three Beings each Almighty, i. e. each possessed of *all* power, nor that these three are one, the same in substance,—for a *self-contradiction*, cannot be believed. The first pair alone then were conscious, for they alone were guilty of that one sin; and for this sin through the mercy of God, they were not accursed as the serpent was, and as the earth was, by being rendered more difficult of culture. This latter annoyance, we grant, was entailed on Adam's posterity; but it is only a temporal inconvenience, necessary for a state of probation, and for yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. I stop not here to show the spiritual blessings and benefits accruing to us from the exertion of our powers both of body and soul, in our present probationary state; but proceed according to promise, to the view given us in holy writ, from the 12th verse of the 5th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the doctrine is supposed to be contained, (there being no allusion made to it by the other apostles, by David, by the prophets, or by the blessed Redeemer.) Indeed the blessed Redeemer denies that the blindness of the man he cured, was owing to his parents' sins, and so far denies that the guilt of *another* can be our guilt. I shall not now enter upon Paul's comments on this doctrine, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, because they are in perfect unison with his Epistle to the Romans. 5 Romans, 12th ver.

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

The above common translation makes our mortality the consequence of our *own actual transgressions*; whereas the object of the apostle is to show, as he does in the two verses following, that our mortality is the consequence of Adam's one sin, and not of our many individual sins. And with this last object, the true translation is in perfect accordance. I refer the Greek scholar to the original; and avoiding the Greek letters, lest they should deter the English scholar from reading this essay, I take the liberty of stating that the true translation of *eph ho pantes hemarton*, is AS FAR AS WHICH all have sinned. Taylor, whose view I generally adopt, alleges, that *ho* refers to *thanato*, but it more properly refers to the circumstance of our *being subjected* to death, as far as which, i. e. our being subjected to death, all have sinned. Being guilty, and being a sufferer are frequently synonymous terms both in the Old and New Testament. The same word being used both for desolation, and being guilty. All are sinners, or treated as such, being made sufferers and sinners, so far as being temporal sufferers, can constitute them sinners. Accordingly in the Hebrew idiom, frequently adopted by Paul, a man is said to bear his sin, to be made guilty, or bring his way upon his head, when he is a temporal sufferer. Observe, the apostle does not say, as the Calvinists do, "and so SIN passed on all men, sin being a matter of choice, but so DEATH a matter of necessity, passed on all men." The word translated *atonement* in the 11th verse, is, in every other part of the New Testament translated *reconciliation*. The original is, change of state, the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. Wherefore, that is in relation to our reconciliation, saith the apostle, as "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned." In other words, as a farther proof of the extension of God's grace to all, and of the propriety of its being founded on the obedience of the blessed Jesus, I shall briefly show you, that as death, the consequence of one's transgression, extended to all, so eternal life, which was the consequence of the righteousness of one, should in equity extend to all. The meaning of the 12th verse then is, as by one man Adam, the first sin was commit-

ted, and so sin entered into the world, and temporal death, its penalty, passed on all men, as far as which, being subjected to mortality, all men have sinned, or suffered. So far as being subject to the temporal sufferings of labour, sickness, and death, so far, but no farther, were we thereby constituted sinners or sufferers.

13th and 14th verses. "For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those, that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who was the figure of him that was to come."

There are some phrases here that require explanation. Sin being a transgression of the law, is not imputable where and when there is no law; from this we may fairly deduce the converse of the proposition, that sin *is* imputable, where there *is* law; and that our sins whether we be elect or non-elect, will be imputable or chargeable on us, for we have law. Death reigned or prevailed, *i. e.* men died, from the time of Adam, till that of Moses. Sinning, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, is sinning against law, the punishment for which is death. Adam was the figure of him that was to come, as the figure on the wax corresponded to that on the seal. And as the rise on the seal makes a sinking in the wax, and the sinking in the seal makes a rising in the wax, so does the sinking in death by Adam correspond to the rising again in Christ. In the 13th and 14th verses, he proceeds to show, that death was the consequence of Adam's sin, and not of his posterity's sins. For though there was sin in the world from the time of Adam to that of Moses, yet was it not imputed; because during those 450 years there was no law, without which there could be no imputation or charge of guilt. Yet death reigned, or men died during that time, though chargeable with no guilt on account of there being then no law. And though men sinned during that time, they sinned not after the similitude of Adam's transgression, *i. e.* against a positive law. But since death reigned during that time, death could not have been the consequence of their sins, which were not then imputable, when there was no law. Death

or Mortality, then, must have been the consequence of Adam's sin, between the consequence of whose sin, and that of Christ's obedience, there is a kind of correspondence, a counteraction of the mortality entailed by Adam's sin, by the life eternal, bequeathed to us by the righteousness and resurrection of Christ.

15th Verse.—“ But not as the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one, many, (the many, or all mankind,) be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many, *i. e.* all mankind.” The meaning of this 15th verse is this, though Adam is a counterpart of the Messiah, and the Messiah's free gift, to a certain extent, meets and matches, and counteracts the effects of Adam's sin; yet the grace and benefits, grounded on the Redeemer's worth, overflow and abound far beyond the removal of the evil consequences of Adam's offence. For God has in Christ not only reconciled to himself us who were at enmity with God, not only freed us from death or mortality, but has given us an overplus of grace, a new dispensation of light, means and motives; remission of sins upon repentance, and acceptance into Heaven on our sincere obedience. Such is the overflow and abounding of grace, over and above the mere reversing of the sentence of mortality, denounced against Adam, and for wise ends made to extend to his posterity.

16.—“ And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of *many offences* unto justification.” That is God's grace in Christ, is not in its object so limited as that summoned forth by the one sin. It not only discharges men from the judicial sentence of mortality, consequent upon Adam's *one* offence, but also hath a similar regard to their own many personal offences, on sincere repentance. And the object of this free gift is to completely justify us from the past sins of Hea-thenism, and all penitent sinners from their sins *heartily* repented of. For repentance does not in itself, entitle us *in justice*, to pardon. Pardon on repentance, is an act of God's free grace, in Christ, grounded on the benevolence, obedience, love and worth of the blessed Jesus.

17.—“For if by one man’s offence, death reigned by one; much more they who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, (or justification) shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.”—If one man’s offence brought mortality into the world, much more will our acceptance of the terms, the redundancy of grace overflowing in means and motives, beyond the reversal of Adam’s sentence, much more shall this acceptance of the means entitle us to be exalted to reign in life eternal.

18.—“Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.”—Since, then, it was not our own individual offences, but Adam’s one offence that subjected all men to Mortality; and since the grace of God, grounded on the Redeemer’s love and obedience, has not only reversed the sentence of Mortality by the tender of Immortality to all that accept the terms; but overflows in motives and benefits for our salvation, far beyond the reversal of the consequence of Adam’s sin, the Apostle returns here to his original position in the 12th verse. After his digression he resumes the same sentiment, contained in the 12th verse, in different words. “As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” conveys the very same idea as “by one man sin entered into the world,” Adam having been the first sinner, and death, (its declared penalty) by sin; it is consistent with God’s justice, that as all temporally suffered by one’s *disobedience*, we should be *all* spiritually benefited by one’s *obedience*. For that suffering should *necessarily* extend to ALL, and the possibility of recovery, only to a chosen few, is derogatory to the justice and mercy of God, and not to be found in the Scriptures. Christ died for all, and since all will not be saved, the failure must be chargeable on us, for not closing with the terms, viz. repentance and amendment.

19.—“For as by one man’s disobedience, the many, that is, all mankind, were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous.”—For as one man’s disobedience, subjected us all to death, by God’s sentence, and being thus visited temporally on us,

made us sinners, so far as it made us all temporal sufferers; so is it equitable that another's obedience should be the ground of our justification and pardon, and being raised to life eternal.

God has then, on the sin of Adam, subjected him and his posterity to labour, sickness and death, all temporal evils, and, in our present condition, for our spiritual good. But he has delivered us from that death, by his gracious respect to Christ's righteousness, and by restoring us to life at the resurrection. And he has not only reversed the sentence of death, but is, through Christ, giving us gifts, mercy, means and motives, and privileges far beyond the reversal of death.

We are then by Adam's offence, subjected to labour, disease, and death, temporal evils. And am I asked why? I answer, because it is good for us to be afflicted. What, I ask, would be the consequence of making all the beggars, and all the labouring classes of society, kings and princes, and of loading them with wealth, and all the luxuries it procures? Why intemperance, gluttony, and inordinate desire, would, in a short time, sweep all but a very few off the face of the earth. Therefore has God kindly withheld from them these means of brutalizing both their bodies and their souls; and in kindness obliged them to labour and endure distress, as a discipline necessary to spiritualize their souls and prepare them for Heaven. I collect then, from these eight verses, that Adam's sin subjected himself and us to sorrow, toil, and death, that the Grace of God, having regard to Christ's worth and obedience, not only restores us to life at the resurrection, but has furnished us with an overflow of means, motives and gifts, both here and in the world to come, far beyond the reversing of the evils brought on us by Adam's sin. And for this *abounding* of grace there would be no room, if Adam brought spiritual death on his descendants; since the reversing of that by Christ, would be doing everything, and would leave nothing to be done by the abounding of grace. Not a word in the Scriptures of our having lost all communion with God, being under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to the pains of Hell for ever.

THE two succeeding Articles have been transmitted to us by a friend; they have, it appears, been disseminated very widely in England, and, though we feel ourselves no way responsible for the sentiments they contain, we give them a place in our pages. They are, we presume, what are commonly but erroneously called Socinian; for, notwithstanding the great number of Humanitarians which are now in England, we have never heard of one Socinian:—that is, a person who believes in the simple humanity of Christ, and at the same time maintains that religious adoration should be paid to him. Should any of our Calvinistic brethren consider the sentiments they contain as requiring notice, we shall give them equal space for their observations.

EDITORS.

A SUMMARY

OF THE LEADING STATEMENTS MADE BY DR. CARPENTER,
IN HIS LECTURES ON THE ATONEMENT.

1. All the Blessings of the Gospel, and all the means through which they were effectually communicated and diffused, originated in the Free Grace, the Love, nay 'the Tender Mercy of our God,' JEHOVAH, the GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ: HIS mercy prompted, HIS wisdom devised, and HIS power effected, the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus: in short, Christ and his salvation were the *effect*, and in no way the *cause*, of the Father's Pardoning Grace towards Mankind.

2. Christ Jesus was the *Medium* of all the gracious communications of Divine Mercy made by the Gospel; he was the Agent of his God and Father in executing the purposes of HIS Grace: and in order to execute them, (influenced by the most consummate piety and obedience to God, and by the purest love to men,) he voluntarily submitted to the painful and ignominious death of the cross, and thereby became the 'Author of an eternal salvation to all who obey him.'

3. The blessings we have by the Gospel, are (in brief) as follows: (1.) A clear knowledge of the character, dealings, and purposes of God, considered not as the

Sovereign Ruler and Righteous Judge of his creatures, but as their Father, their Friend, and their Benefactor.

(2) The certain disclosure by HIS express authority, of a Resurrection from the dead, and a life to come; a state of righteous retribution,—of dreadful wo to the impenitent and disobedient,—of holy bliss to the penitent, sincere, and faithful; and this according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or whether they be evil. (3) The assurance on the express authority of God himself, of HIS mercy to the truly penitent who forsake their evil ways and turn unto the LORD with full purpose of heart,—the assurance of the remission of sins on repentance. (4) Plain and profitable directions in the way of duty, showing with certainty, (by precepts and by example) what is the will of God; what dispositions and what external conduct will be acceptable to HIM; and what are offensive in HIS sight. (5) The promise to those who faithfully seek his favour, of all needful aid and support in the trials and duties of life; and the confident assurance that all things shall work together for their good.

4. All these inestimable blessings, (with especial reference to the forgiveness of sins) constitute together the *Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*,—the means of deliverance from the power and punishment of sin, and the fear of death. And all these we have ‘through his blood,’ through his death. We can possess them (as we now do) on divine promise, only by faith in him; and if this faith becomes a vital principle of the heart, regulating the life it is a faith unto salvation.

5. Since we should not have possessed the blessed and sanctifying promises and guidance of the Gospel, but by his death,—since his death, though on his own part perfectly voluntary, was (by the appointment of infinite wisdom) necessary to convey, assure, and diffuse them to mankind,—we owe the possession of Gospel privileges to his death; and whatever influence they have upon us in delivering us from the bondage of sin and death, and making us fit objects of God’s pardoning mercy and final acceptance, may be justly ascribed to his death. His blood ratified the new covenant, and was shed for the remission of sins; and he gave up his life as a ransom or means of spiritual deliverance.

6. These *facts*,—taken in connexion with the peculiar features of the Jewish dispensation, (its ritual and sacrifices, and its exclusive privileges,) with the language of the Old Testament respecting the temporal deliverance by the hand of Moses, and with the circumstances of the Gentiles at the time of Christ, furnish an adequate explanation of all the language of the New Testament respecting the death of Christ. The substance of the whole is, that ‘in him we have redemption THROUGH his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.’

7. The death of Christ has its efficacy in producing the believer’s pardon and acceptance, only by the influence of his work and gospel. God does not pardon the sins of the believer *for the sake of* Christ; but, for his own mercy’s sake, and in consequence of the repentance and righteousness which are wrought by faith in Christ, that is in the divine authority of his work and message.—*Eph. iv. 32.* is the only place in the Common Translation where God is represented as pardoning sins for the sake of Christ; and this should have been rendered ‘as God, in (or by) Christ, hath forgiven you.’—‘The Man Christ Jesus’ is ‘the *Mediator* between God and men,’ because he was the Minister and Messenger of God’s grace to mankind: he is our *Propitiation*, because he conveyed to us the offers of pardoning mercy, and died to assure them to us: and by him we have the *Atonement* (*At-one-ment*), since by the influence of his work and gospel the believer is brought into a state of acceptance with God. The word *Atonement* occurs once only in reference to Christ, *viz. Rom. v. 11*, and there should have been rendered *Reconciliation*, as in *2 Cor. v. 19*. The Gospel of Christ is the *Atonement* or *Reconciliation*, because it turns men from darkness to light, and from the power of sin unto God, so that they may receive forgiveness here and an eternal inheritance hereafter.

8. Whatever is inconsistent with No. 1. must be false. We are therefore certain, that the death of Christ did not make God merciful, did not appease his wrath, did not *dispose* him to forgive.

9. The *theories* of philosophers and divines upon this subject are worth nothing. No effect can be justly ascribed to the death of Christ, which is not *declared* in

the Scriptures. It is no where declared that the death of Christ satisfied the Law or the Justice of God ; that God could not forgive sins without a *satisfaction*. It is no where declared that the punishment of sin must fall somewhere ; and that an innocent person might undergo it as a substitution for the guilty, and the guilty escape. But it is declared that God will abundantly pardon the wicked who forsake their evil way, and turn unto the Lord ; and the honour of God's law requires that its offers of mercy should be fulfilled as well as its threatenings of punishment.

10. In fine, we have abundant cause to cherish lively grateful love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to glory in his cross, since through it we have all the blessings of the Gospel : but God even the Father is the Sole Original Source of them ; and to HIM be supreme gratitude, love, and obedience.

HINTS ON CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION.

WHEN we are informed in the New Testament, that Christ *died for us* ; that he gave himself for us ; that God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ; it has been supposed by the generality of professing christians, that by these and similar phrases, we ought to understand, that Christ died in our stead, in our room and place, &c.

This opinion is exceedingly fallacious, it has not the least countenance from the Scriptures. We are informed by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 3. Christ died for our sins. Now did he die instead of our sins ? Is there any one so ignorant as to draw such a conclusion ? Jesus is said to have obtained eternal redemption *for us*. Heb. ix. 12. He is entered into heaven to appear in the presence of God *for us*. Are we then to be indifferent respecting our redemption, and our ultimate happiness ? What then, I shall perhaps, be asked, is the meaning of the expression, He died for us ? I answer, he died for our benefit ; he died for us, as he sealed the truth of his testimony by his own blood, that he might by that Gospel, which was confirmed by his death, bring us nigh to God, purify us from all iniquity, and thus pre-

pare us for a state of usefulness and happiness in the ages to come. For this purpose hath the Gospel, styled by way of eminence, the grace of God, appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and piously, in this present world.

Let us briefly inquire into the meaning of the term, as used by the writers of the scriptures.

To redeem is to rescue, to restore, to deliver from a state of bondage, and Christian Redemption is that deliverance which is effected by the Gospel, brought to the world by Jesus the Christ.

The children of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, where they were sore oppressed and loaded with heavy burdens, and were kept in a state of cruel slavery. Under this state of things, they cried unto Jehovah their God, and he *redeemed* them, he delivered them from their painful situation. And the Lord said unto Moses, say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will bring you out of their bondage, and I will *redeem* you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. Exod. vi. 6. The Lord effected the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, he *redeemed* them, and carried them to the land which he had promised to their fathers. Moses, in celebrating this event says, "Thou in thy mercy hast *led forth* thy people, thou hast *redeemed*, thou hast *guided* them in thy strength to thy holy habitation."

The deliverance of the people of Israel is also called a *ransom*, and the people are called the ransomed of the Lord. Isaiah, ch. li. 10. describes the arm of the Lord, as drying up the sea, to make a way for the ransomed to pass over; and in the next verse he uses the term *redeemed* in the same sense;—"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return."

When the people of Israel were in trouble and oppressed by those who prevailed against them, and led them into captivity; God raised up Saviours, Deliverers, or Redeemers for them. He *redeemed* them by the hand of *Gideon*, he *delivered* them by the hand of *Ehud*, and he *saved* them by the hand of *Jephthah*, &c.

Job v. 19, 20. He shall deliver thee in six troubles,

he shall *redeem* thee; and even in war from the power of the sword. Psalm. lxxix. 18. Draw nigh unto my soul and *redeem* it; *deliver* me because of my enemies. Psalm lxxii. 14. He shall *redeem* their soul from deceit and violence. Psalm cxx. 8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Hosea xiii. 14. I will *redeem* him from the power of the grave; I will redeem him from death. Gal. x. 16. To redeem them that were under the power of the law. A very large number of texts might be quoted to the same effect, but the above are quite sufficient to show, that the meaning of the word *redeem* is to deliver, to rescue, and to set at liberty; and that, redemption is *deliverance*. God did not purchase his people from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt, nor from the hand of any one who held them in bondage. He gave to no one a price, an equivalent for the life of his servant David; he redeemed the Children of Israel by his mighty power, and by his own strong right hand. The terms cannot be taken in a literal sense, for in that sense the subject would be involved in the greatest inconsistency, not to say absurdity.

The terms bought, purchased, redeemed, &c. must be taken in a figurative sense, they denote that as men procure to themselves by the means of buying, purchasing, &c., that which they wish to possess, so the term is applied to the conduct of the Divine Being in the ways of his providence and grace, in which, by the displays of his wisdom and the exertions of his power, he has accomplished great and important events. Christians are said to be bought with a price, 1 Cor. vii. 23. comp. with 2 Pet. ii. 1. The immoral professors of the gospel are said to deny the Lord who bought them. This language literally would represent Christian Redemption in the light of a bargain, of sale, purchase and delivery; as a mere mercantile transaction, and involve the greatest absurdity. It was by construing the language literally, that the doctrine of satisfaction for sins by the Death of Jesus of Nazareth first obtained, and by the same means it is still maintained. The terms bought, purchased, in all the passages of scripture referring to the doctrine of redemption must be taken in a figurative sense. A literal purchase implies a seller and a buyer,

the buyer gives to the seller a price for the person or thing purchased. If Christ paid the price, then he had an exclusive right to the thing purchased; but Christ could not in a literal sense pay a price, he could not literally buy sinners, because he received all things at the hands of his Father as a free gift; "Thine they were, and thou *gavest* them me." John xvii. 6.

A question then arises, if Christ literally bought sinners, of whom did he buy them, to whom did he pay the price? Origen says, Christ bought us from the Devil, whose slaves we were, and who demanded what price he pleased, that he might dismiss from his power those which he held; and the Devil demanded the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption. Ambrose says, "We were pledged to a bad creditor, for sin. Christ came and offered his blood for us." Austin says, "The blood of Christ is given as a price, and yet the Devil is not enriched but bound by it, that we might be delivered from his bonds." If sinners were bought, in a literal sense, it must be either of God or the Devil; (whoever or whatever the latter may be, he is the *alpha* and *omega* of the orthodox system) to say they were bought of God, excludes salvation by his free grace or favor; to say they were bought of the Devil, shocks the feelings of most christians of the present day; yet we cannot get rid of it, but by abandoning the literal sense of the term. The same forms of expression frequently occur in the Old Testament, and are generally admitted to be figurative. Deut. xxxii. 6. Israel is reminded that JEHOVAH *bought* them; but of whom did he buy them? and what was the price he paid for them? Every one will see that the expression is figurative, and relates to the manifestation of divine power, by which they were brought out of Egypt. Again, God is said to *sell* his people; he sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, Judges iii. 8. Not literally, he received no price for them, it only means, that he delivered them into the hands of their enemies. We read of buying the truth; of *buying* wine, and milk, &c. *without money* and *without price*; of persons having sold themselves for nought, &c. all this must evidently be taken in a figurative sense, for any other would be absolute nonsense.

In the New Testament the same form of expression

prevails. Rev. iii. 18. Jesus says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." God is said, Acts xx. 28, to have *purchased* the church, but of whom did he purchase it? 1 Cor. vi. Ye are not your own, ye are *bought* with a price; ye are, as if the Apostle had said, God's *property*. In these, and all similar passages of Scripture, we must understand the language figuratively, if we wish to form any proper idea on the subject.

Christ is said to have given himself a *ransom* for us. Orthodox Christians have represented this as literal, that he really gave his life as an equivalent for our deliverance. Isaiah xlii. 3. It is said, "I gave Egypt for thy *ransom*, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. But to whom were these nations given by the Supreme Being; the judgments inflicted upon these nations were the means of Israel's deliverance. It is by destroying the wicked tyrant that the yoke of tyranny is destroyed. It is nowhere said, that Jesus gave to the Father a price for the salvation of mankind, on the contrary it is asserted, that "God so loved the world that he *gave* his only Son," &c.

The redemption which came by Jesus the Christ, is the deliverance effected by the Gospel from the bondage of Jewish Ceremonies, from Pagan superstition, from vice, sin, death, and all the consequences of transgression. Man shall be redeemed from the power of the grave; those who have done good shall rise to the inheritance of life in the kingdom of Christ; those who have died in sin and iniquity will rise in exactly the same moral state; they will therefore rise to the chastisements of that period, they must undergo the punishments proportioned to their crimes and suited to their moral state. Still the work of redemption will be going on; the Lord of the dead and the living will carry into effect the primitive design of his great Father, and when the kingdom shall be wholly redeemed, when it shall be purified, then shall come the end. Death and pain, with sin and sorrow, shall be annihilated, the kingdom shall be given up to the Father; millions of Hallelujahs, shall resound through the wide expanse; and God, the One Living and True God, be ALL in ALL.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE "FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AMERICAN
UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION."

WE regret exceedingly that we cannot give the whole of this most interesting report, which contains sixty closely printed pages of similar size to that of our own publication. We rejoice however, to remark, that among the members of the association and its agents, are to be found a number of the most learned and eminent men of the United States. The meeting was held at Boston.

EDITORS.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

"THE fifth anniversary assembles the members of this association under circumstances of peculiar promise to the great interests for which they are united. After presenting, in obedience to their duty as officers of this society, a sketch of their proceedings during the last year, the executive committee will offer some statements by which they hope to show the justice of this remark.

Convinced by an observation of five years that the means of disseminating correct religious opinions, that is at once the most effectual and the least liable to objection, is the circulation of tracts, they have given to this their special attention; and within the last year have adopted two measures of some importance. The first series of tracts is now continued monthly, and may be regarded as a Unitarian periodical, which, alike by the regularity of its publication and the value of its contents, will satisfy the wishes of subscribers. A third series has been proposed, and pressing occupation only prevented the issue of the first number before this time. It will be commenced immediately. It will be confined to biography of Unitarians distinguished for their services or their characters, and while exhibiting the efficacy of our faith in examples drawn from real life, will afford instruction and virtuous incitement to the reader. Four numbers, published at intervals of three months, will make a volume, worthy of a place in our libraries, and permanently valuable. The members of the Association

will not be entitled to this series by virtue of their subscription; its continuance, therefore, will depend on the sale, which again will be determined by the desire that may be felt to possess a course of profitable and interesting works.—The publication of the second series of tracts was suspended, and has been only lately resumed, as the belief that a series, cheaper in price and more simple in character than the first series, would be popular, has not been confirmed. A tract of this kind will however be occasionally issued. Since the last anniversary eleven new tracts have been printed, and new editions of four others.

The agency was transferred last September to Messrs. Gray and Bowen, whose interest and activity have given a new impulse to this branch of our operations. Soon after their appointment, other business led Mr. Gray to undertake a journey through the southern and western States, from which he has just returned, having spent seven months in a tour, along the Atlantic coast, thence to New Orleans, and by the Mississippi and the Ohio to lake Erie, and thence across the state of New-York. Through this whole route he made it one of his principal objects to establish agencies and depositories, in which he was very successful. Our publications will now be regularly transmitted to every part of our country. Mr. Gray also collected on his journey a great amount of information, and brought home a strong conviction that the means of reading and hearing what Unitarian Christians believe alone was wanted to work a great change, or rather to call forth an expression of sentiment already existing, in the minds of the people in most of the places which he visited.

Some appropriations have been made for the support of Unitarian preaching—in Maine, in Connecticut, in the western part of New-York, and in Ohio. In some instances, these appropriations have enabled a missionary to visit various places, and in others they have been designed to assist members of particular societies in maintaining regular worship. The Committee do not deem it impertinent in them to express their views on this subject. Aware that this Association has raised its voice against measures, the tendency and effect of

which are to sow discord in parishes, and to create churches whose strength shall be in the inverse ratio of their number, they have cautioned those persons who have been in their employment, against an intrusion upon the ecclesiastical order or the domestic harmony of a place. They do not encourage the wish of disaffected or aggrieved individuals to hear a different kind of preaching from that to which they have been accustomed, until they have legally organized a religious society; nor do they advise that this step be taken till there shall be a reasonable persuasion of an ability to support public worship. The multiplication of religious societies which must depend upon foreign aid for support is an evil, that is not compensated by the greater satisfaction the members find in listening to teachers whose sentiments they approve; for such reliance is precarious, the assistance is often inadequate to the wants of the people, and the ministry is in danger of becoming a feeble instrument, weakened if not degraded by the circumstances under which it is exercised. Where, however, small societies are formed, it is important that they should pursue their objects in the manner best adapted to promote their own spiritual comfort, and yet to prevent or allay unkind feeling in their respective towns. In cities and populous towns, the evils that accrue from division of small parishes are not felt, and in these places there can be no objection to Unitarian preaching, under circumstances calculated to secure attention and respect. Even here, however, it is unwise to rest on the hope of assistance from abroad. Let each society attempt no more than it has within itself the ability to accomplish, and more will be done, while the inconvenience and disappointment to which we are now sometimes exposed, will be avoided. These are general principles, the force and application of which may be qualified by circumstances, but of their correctness, as general principles, the Committee entertain no doubt.

The Domestic Mission established in this city under the patronage of this Association, has continued to be a means of great good. The ministry at large in Boston is now sustained by four clergymen of different denominations, and though we do not claim the honour of

taking the first step towards this result, it is not doubtful that the success of Dr. Tuckerman's labours, and the proof they afforded of the practicability and excellence of the plan, recommended it to other friends of the poor. His services the last year have been interrupted only by the frequent debility of a frame unequal to the exertions which his office imposes. Two semi-annual reports have been published, the latter of which is particularly valuable. We regard this ministry as among the great blessings of our city. We believe, that as an auxiliary to the police, and as a preventive of crime, it might even be supported at the public expense, and that as a source of relief, and comfort, and hope to the children of poverty, and to others who have fallen from a better condition, its benefits cannot be described.

Correspondence has been maintained with persons in different parts of the country. Information has been gathered from the north, the centre, the south, and the west, and in return we have sent sometimes our sympathy, sometimes our preachers, and sometimes our tracts. Of these, a considerable amount have occasionally been placed in the hands of individuals, for gratuitous distribution.

Our foreign correspondence has been conducted with some activity, but we have had occasion to regret the absence of our foreign secretary. On his return, more frequent communication will take place between us and our brethren abroad. From the British Association, we have received expressions of fraternal regard. Nothing of peculiar interest has occurred in England, but in Ireland opinion has assumed a tone that augurs much good. The cause of religious truth and liberty has been espoused by numbers, and advocated with an earnestness and power worthy of their purpose. Never has Irish fervor been kindled from a holier fire, and never has Irish eloquence poured itself forth in nobler strains.—Our tracts have been read with approbation in England, and in March, an order was received from the Western Unitarian Society, for one hundred copies of most of those which we had published.

On the continent of Europe, we have been informed that there are indications of the progress of rational

views of Christianity. But it must be slow, when obliged to overcome the intellectual and moral darkness, the social and religious disadvantages, and the force of prescription, under some of which evils all the countries of continental Europe labour, and by all of which some of them are oppressed.

No change by which the condition of Christian Unitarianism in Calcutta would be effected, has occurred since our last report. From William Roberts, the native teacher near Madras, gratifying intelligence has been received. He is preparing his sons to assist and succeed him in the ministry, and the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association have undertaken to educate one of them in England.

The receipts and expenditures of the past year, and the present state of the funds of the Association, are exhibited in the statement of the Treasurer.

In regard to the resources of the Association, the Committee must repeat the suggestion which they have made in former reports. Our dependence must be on auxiliaries. The attempt to collect the subscriptions of individuals is pronounced by the treasurer tedious, difficult, and almost fruitless. The expense is great, and the inconvenience such as to dissuade the Committee from using this means of augmenting their funds. It is through auxiliaries alone that the treasury can be enabled to meet the demands made on it. It is on them alone that the Committee can rest their calculations respecting the ability of the Association to satisfy the wants of the land. The people are thirsting for instruction. They call to us to give it to them from the press and from the pulpit, in the silent pamphlet, and through the living teacher. We cannot refuse them without a pang keener than his who is obliged to see bodily want that he cannot relieve. Here are the wants of the mind, its immortal wants, lifting up the cry for help. For the sake of that charity, which is the best of all forms of this best of graces, by their love for the souls of men, we entreat our brethren to have compassion on the needy. We ask them to give us the means of christian benevolence, and we not only remind them of our divine Master's words, that 'it is more blessed to give

than to receive,' but we show them how they may make the very act of contribution an occasion of self-improvement. The Committee have recently published some remarks, the object of which is to present a plan by which the local interests of a society, and the interests of this Association may be combined. This tract has been widely distributed, and they cannot forbear to press its suggestions upon the notice of their friends. They think the time has come when they may say that it is their belief that the existence of an auxiliary in every Unitarian society would promote the welfare of that society scarcely less than it would benefit this Association; while, if these Auxiliaries should be formed and maintained, nothing that we foresee could prevent the wide, and free, and fair dissemination of our faith.

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In the beginning of this Report it was said, that we meet under circumstances of peculiar encouragement. Since the last anniversary, thirteen ordinations and installations have taken place, and the days are appointed for four more. Besides which, the number of vacant parishes exceeds the number of candidate preachers in the proportion of three to two; several new Societies have been formed and others have become Unitarian. The present number of Unitarian Congregational Societies in Massachusetts is 147, of which 118 are supplied with ordained ministers; in Maine, 12 societies, 8 ministers; in New Hampshire, 11 societies, 10 ministers; in Vermont, 3 societies, 1 minister; in Rhode Island, 2 societies, 2 ministers; in Connecticut, 2 societies, 1 minister.

Total in New England, alone 177 societies, 140 ministers.

* * * * *

The societies which make the diffusion of Unitarian Christianity their sole object, are, besides our own, these five. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity, was established—by Emerson, Buckminster, Kirkland and others, among the dead and the living, whose names are dear to us,—for the purpose of printing cheap religious books. They redeemed the pledge they gave in their constitution, by the successive numbers of the Christian Monitor. For some years this society has been in active, but it has a considerable fund, and is intending to resume its operations.

The Evangelical Missionary Society, was originally formed in the counties of Worcester and Middlesex, for the purpose of affording aid to feeble churches. This society has been very useful, and continues by its annual appropriations to sustain many who might without its aid despond.

The hope is entertained that in future years these two societies will unite with this Association in the celebration of their anniversaries.

The Society for the Promotion of Christianity in India, has valuable funds at its disposal, and when a proper opportunity shall occur, its officers will be ready to follow the intimations of Providence.

The Unitarian Book and Pamphlet Society, though it has been in operation only three years, has done extensive good. While it is independent of this Association it co-operates with it most effectually, and as the distributor of our tracts, and the pioneer of our missionaries, its aid is every year seen to be more important.

The Boston Sunday School Society has been but partially successful in that branch of its operations which consists in publishing juvenile books, in consequence of embarrassments which will soon be removed. In other respects it has been eminently useful; in drawing attention to the subject of Sunday schools by its circulars, in strengthening the interest felt on this subject by its annual celebrations, and in quickening the zeal and enlightening the judgment of teachers by its quarterly meetings. The Report read at the last anniversary afforded conclusive evidence of its usefulness. Sunday schools, which a few years since, were rare among us, are now almost universal, and have become subjects of deep regard.

Our periodical publications are also five. The Christian Register has been conducted the last year with spirit and industry. The Unitarian Advocate has passed from the hands of its former editor, but has retained its character for ability, and practical value. The Christian Teacher's Manual, has also appeared in a new series, but is supported by the same talented and judicious writers. The Liberal Preacher offers its monthly selection from the manuscripts of our living divines; and the

Christian Examiner, uniting sound literary judgment to a fervent spirit of religious inquiry, is exerting an influence upon opinions and morals to which it is richly entitled.

The third instrument which we may use for the spread of our faith is the ministry, the institution which Jesus Christ himself founded, when he sent forth his apostles to preach the everlasting gospel. The age demands an intelligent, active, and disinterested ministry. It is more important than our words can show, that such a ministry be educated for our churches. We have one Theological School, and the Committee do not think the slightest exaggeration was used, when it was styled by a recent advocate of its claims, 'the great religious charity of the day.' It stands in the front of those institutions which Unitarian Christians should be anxious to foster. The ill health of one of the Professors, which has obliged him to resign a part of his duties, and the absence of another who was induced to seek a foreign climate by the same cause, have been unfortunate circumstances, but the school at Cambridge has been, since our last meeting, more prosperous than at any former period. Nothing could exhibit more clearly the importance of this seminary, or the advance of our faith, than the facts, that though the Directors established last summer a regulation restraining the members of the School from preaching, they have been compelled by the imperious wants of the churches to suspend the operation of the rule in many cases, and that at this time several, who if the prescribed term of preparation had been observed would now be at Cambridge, are ordained clergymen, or are under engagements to settle in the ministry. These facts should be known, that serious young men whose desire is for usefulness, may enter on a path which is sure to lead them to it, and that they, who can give substantial patronage, may enlarge the means of education possessed by this School.

* * * * *

We regard the extension of our faith as the great means of opposing and subverting error in opinion, and should therefore use all upright means of giving it currency and securing for it favour. There are two extremes in error, against each of which Unitarian

Christianity directs its force, and is in the hand of him who wields it a two-edged sword to cut down with equal ease the sophisms of infidelity, and the absurdities of fanaticism. Within a year or two past some alarm has been excited by the efforts of a few individuals in some parts of our country, to disseminate the rankest form of unbelief, even to convert this people into a nation of atheists. The attempt was too preposterous to be successful, and by its very extravagance and effrontery is defeating itself. We are confident that if evangelical Unitarianism be preached intelligibly and earnestly—and how else can it be preached by one who reverences it as the gift of God—they to whom the advocates of infidelity address themselves, will be prepared to repel their arguments, and to rebuke their sneers.

* * * * *

Occasionally during the last year, our opinions and our friends have been assailed by language as indecorous as it was unchristian, but denunciation has lost its power, and we believe that among those who think us in great error, a more just spirit prevails. A party may press its measures without regard to propriety or truth, but it will be found that they sacrifice also their character and gain nothing. Virulence and exclusiveness, if not successful in their objects, cover those who use them with shame.

But above all other reasons, we burn with a desire to propagate our faith, because we believe that it is the great instrument of staying and subduing irreligion. It is because Unitarian Christianity is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it as it ought to be believed, that we are chiefly anxious to multiply facilities for its progress through the world. We believe that our Master, when he ascended to his Father and his God, left it to carry on the work for which he came,—to call sinners to repentance. We believe that he taught and suffered, that he might make men partakers of the divine holiness, and that the religion which lawfully bears his name, must have this for its object and effect. Therefore we wish not only ourselves to be followers of Christ, but to bring others to walk with us. Therefore we would labour to remove every obstacle in the way of this faith, and would win others to its love and obedience.

We see vice and crime, private and public sin, personal and social wickedness on every side of us; the moral atmosphere in which we live is not pure. We would send the spirit of our religion through it; we would hold up to general view those solemn truths and affecting revelations and momentous sanctions by which the careless may be moved, and the perverse be humbled; by which they who are disobedient may be reclaimed, and they who are in the way of righteousness may be animated to perseverance.

With this estimation of our faith we would not only live and die *by* it; but we would live, and if Providence require the immolation, we would die *for* it. We can hardly repress our astonishment when we hear Unitarian Christianity reproached as a lax system, as a faith deficient in moral power. We can hardly hold our peace, when any one who professes to understand it, does not perceive its practical and spiritual character. These are in our eyes its peculiar features. We are not ignorant that the best and the only satisfactory proof that we can give to others of its moral efficacy is, its influence on ourselves. We do not deem it without our province to remind our brethren, in the language of an apostle, that they who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. It is said by some who differ from us, that this belief is not sufficient to work this effect. We ask no other faith than that which makes the God, whom Jesus Christ revealed, the centre of its thoughts and aims; and if we do not show forth the power of this faith in our characters, we have not learned the alphabet of our religion.

The world is crying out for truth and freedom, and holiness. These are the three great blessings of man. We believe that Unitarian Christianity confers them all, and therefore we labour and pray that it may become universal."

CHRISTIAN TRACT SOCIETY.

WE recommended in a former Number, the publications of this Society, and we have now much pleasure in furnishing our readers with the Report of the Twenty-second Anniversary, a copy of which was sent us within

these few days. The Meeting was held at the Worship-street Chapel, London, May 5th, when the Rev. Robert Aspland was called to the Chair.

REPORT.

The Committee have great satisfaction in stating, that your Institution appears to be attracting more of the public attention; and this circumstance, as well as an increased conviction of the utility of the objects which they have in view, has induced them to make an outlay of capital in the printing of old and new Tracts, and the binding of volumes, which in other circumstances would not have been justifiable.

Knowing the wish entertained by many of the Subscribers to have new Tracts put into their hands, the Committee have this year printed three new ones, viz: No. 58, *The Harvestman's Feast*; No. 59, *The Genius of Christianity*, (re-printed from the American edition,) by the Rev. W. H. Furness; and No. 60, *The History of William Rogers; or attention to the Fifth Commandment recommended*. All these Tracts the Committee consider to be well suited to the purposes of the Society. Nos. 58 and 60, both from the pen of the same Lady, contain excellent lessons for the poor and for the young; and No. 59, *The Genius of Christianity*, breathes throughout the spirit of practical piety, of gentleness, and of peace. It is not indeed of so plain a character as most other Tracts in the Society's series; yet the Committee are of opinion that none can peruse it without benefit; and the rapid sale which it has obtained, assures them that they did right in printing off a thousand copies in a superior style, at 3*d.*, in addition to two thousand at 2*d.*

No. 60 forms the conclusion of Volume VI., and several Subscribers have expressed a wish to receive their volumes in half-binding, the Committee have had a number of sets done up in that style, as well as in cloth boards. Those in roan half-binding, at 15*s.* to Societies, they beg to recommend as peculiarly suitable to Vestry and Sunday-school Libraries.

Being authorized, by a vote of the Annual Meeting of May 1830, to omit the reprinting of certain of the old Tracts, should they deem it advisable, the Committee

accordingly reserved for Volumes the remaining copies of Nos. 4, 12, and 38, and stated in the last year's Catalogue that these numbers were not to be had as separate Tracts. They have since, however, repinted No. 38, considering it to be a valuable Tract, and that it forms part of a series from the pen of the Rev. Richard Wright. They have also thought it right to send again to the press No. 9, *A Dialogue between a Minister and his Parishioner*; No. 10, *The Orphan Sisters*; Nos. 22, 24, 25, three Parts of *The Village Dialogues*; No. 26, *A Week in a Cottage*; No. 27, *Edward Allen*; No. 29, *The Widow*; and No. 53, *The Village Philanthropists*;—in all ten Tracts.

During the last year there have been issued from the store 23,000 Tracts—a result which the Committee feel themselves justified in attributing, not merely to the circumstance that the catalogues for 1830 were delayed till after the Annual Meeting, while those of the current year that have been already sent out, but to an increased demand for their publications on the part of the public.

Impressed with a conviction that their Tracts are calculated to do much good, they have made grants of them, in quarters where they apprehend them to be peculiarly needed, and likely also to be well received. In England they have granted Tracts for distribution to friends residing at Luton, Ditchling, Newbury, Banbury, Northampton, Tunstall, and to the Rev. — Heathcote, who is forming a Library for the use of the labouring classes at Dornal, near Dudley. In the autumn a set was forwarded to the Rev. Fletcher Blakely, of Moneyrea, near Belfast, who says he is persuaded that the dissemination of our publications in the North of Ireland would better the morals of the multitude, recommends that a few sets should be sent to Mr. Archer, of Belfast, and promises to bring them into notice by every exertion in his power. Accordingly, the Committee sent a large parcel of Tracts and Volumes to Mr. Archer, on sale or return, and they indulge the pleasing hope that these, along with those ordered by the Rev. J. Martineau, of Dublin, will be the means of introducing a few more rays of Christian light into that most interesting part of the British empire.

Nor have your Committee confined their attention

either to England or to the Sister Island. Through Mr. Bischoff, acting Director of the Van Diemen's Land Company, they have transmitted a set of their Tracts to be placed in the library at Circular Head, the chief town in that flourishing settlement; and they have added £2 worth of Tracts to be distributed among the convicts who have lately been transported to the same colony on account of the disturbances in the Southern counties. Through Dr. Bowring they have presented a set of their publications to the Tot Nut van't Algemeen (or Common Welfare) Society at Amsterdam, and they are happy to state, that they have lately received a packet of books in return, as well as a letter from the Secretary, of which the following is a translation :—

“To Mr. S. Wood, London.

“Reverend Sir,

“The parcel of publications by the Christian Tract Society, which you did us the honour to send, together with a letter of the 9th of August last, by Dr. Bowring, we put into the hands of a Committee of those of our members who, by their knowledge of the English language, are the most competent to judge of their value. This, however, has required time; and we request that you will attribute to this circumstance the delay of our answer.

“The report of this Committee enables us to inform you of the pleasure with which we received your present, particularly as it appears to us that the object which you propose, as well as the means which you employ to accomplish it, are, in a great measure, the same as our own. We say, *in a great measure*, because, as you are rightly informed, our attention is directed not only to the religious, but to the temporal interests of the lower class of people. As far as the publications which you have sent are in accordance with the former part of our design, we will gladly make use of them.

“In compliance with your request, we have the honour to send herewith some of the pamphlets which we distribute of that kind, and such as we suppose will be the best suited to the object which you have in view. We add a list of all the works published by us, and shall be most happy to forward to you any of them that you may wish for.

“We beg you to accept in return the assurance of our

cordial esteem, and the expression of our joy that, in the midst of national troubles, there are in every country persons who are ready to lend their zealous endeavours to build up and to adorn the temples of religion and virtue.

“ By order of the Society for the General Welfare,

“ HENDRIK RAVEKES,

“ *Amsterdam, March 23, 1831.*

SECRETARY.”

“ Another set of the Tracts was presented to the Count Arrivabene, who visited England about a year ago, for the special purpose of making himself acquainted with our best institutions for the instruction of the ignorant and the relief of the destitute. Sets have also been presented to Messieurs Paul de Balog and Alexander Farkas, two gentlemen of different communions, from Clausenburg, in Transylvania, who are now making the tour of England and America, and who evince a most laudable desire to establish in their own country institutions similar to those which constitute the pride and ornament of other nations more highly favoured. The Rev. Henry Ware, jun., had a selection of the Tracts given to him, previously to his return to America, where the first four volumes of the Society's series have been reprinted. The Committee have also not overlooked those excellent and zealous labourers in the vineyard of Christ, William Roberts of Madras, and Chiniah, of Secunderabad; and they are happy to conclude this enumeration by stating, that they have availed themselves of the arrival of Rammohun Roy in this country, to place their Tracts in the hands of one whose enlightened mind and truly philanthropic spirit render him so well able to appreciate the purposes for which your institution was founded.

“ Finding that the stock of Tracts which was entrusted to various agents in the country, did not obtain much sale, the Committee have thought fit to recall it; and they take this opportunity of expressing their opinion, that they will in general be much more effectually promoting the interests of the Society by concentrating their stock in London, than by having portions of it distributed in different provincial towns. The situation of their own depot affords considerable facilities for forwarding parcels to various parts of the kingdom; and the arrangements which have been made will prevent

the recurrence of those delays which have formerly been complained of.

“ Although great exertions have this year been made to collect outstanding debts, and to increase the list of Subscribers and Donors, the expenses which the Committee have been led to incur, in order to carry into effect the purposes of the Institution, have been more than usually heavy ; and they are sorry to state that at the present time they owe £70, and have not more than £40 available towards its discharge. Some of the expenses above alluded to are indeed such as will not occur again, having been occasioned by the fitting up of the office in Walbrook Buildings ; yet the Committee are deeply sensible that the ordinary proceeds of subscriptions and of Tracts sold are not sufficient to defray their current expenses, and to enable them both to make the grants which are desirable, and to meet the wishes of the Subscribers for a frequent supply of new publications. In these circumstances they venture to appeal to the generous consideration of the public. They are persuaded that such little works as *William's Return*, *The Twin Brothers*, *Henry Goodwin*, and *James Talbot*, need only to be known, to have their value acknowledged ; and they refer with confidence to what they have this year done in the printing and distributing of Tracts, as some pledge that the Society is in an effective state, and that the money which is distributed will be well bestowed.”

It appears from the accounts of the Society that they have printed 511,781 Tracts ; sent out 440,781, and that they have stock valued at £489.

ON ATTENTION TO THE EXTERNAL FORMS AND INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGION.

THERE is an “evil under the sun” which, though I believe gradually diminishing, is still injurious to the interests of rational Christianity—I mean the want of proper attention, on the part of liberal and enlightened men, to the external forms and institutions of religion. This may arise from their contempt of superstition, and from their fear of being ranked among the fanatical ; but from whatever source it springs, it is very repre-

hensible. It is true, there are many who seem to think that all duty consists in the observance of ordinances and ceremonies, and in abstaining from the weightier transgressions of the law—many who seem to think that prayer is morality, and that kneeling is religion, and who, therefore, seldom perform an action pleasing to God or worthy the approbation of man. They pay tithes of all they possess—they pray in corners of streets and use vain repetitions as the heathens do—when they fast, they disfigure their faces—when they give alms they sound a trumpet,—they thank God that they are not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; and the whole head and front of their holiness, hath this extent—no more. But those liberal and enlightened men of whom I complain, very often take an opposite course, and whilst they are not only generous and humane—whilst they not only “visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions,” and have a “tear for pity, and hands open as day to melting charity;” but are also deeply and most sincerely devout,—they neglect those *open* and *public* manifestations of their piety to which all Christians should attend. The seat of religion is surely in the heart, but its influence should extend to such external acts as have in themselves a direct tendency to kindle and keep alive the spirit and feeling of devotion; and though hypocrites and fanatics make an ostentatious, and to people of sense and sincerity, a disgusting parade of sanctity, yet all this should not prevent the true disciple of Christ from letting ‘his light shine before men.’ In point of punctuality to the *externals* of religion, we must indeed yield the palm to the Calvinists, and it were a desirable thing if some among *us* had a portion of what they could spare. But we do not attach the same degree of importance to mere outward forms—we do not think that every one “who saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven,” and therefore some of the worthless characters in society are apt to regard such forms with indifference. They see those who pretend *most* in reality practice little—they hear *canting* accounted righteousness, and they every day behold spiritual *pride* imposed on the world as spiritual *wisdom*. Disgusted with the fantastic tricks exhibited by fanaticism and bigotry—hypocrisy and superstition—they frequently come to the conclusion, that religion re-

solves itself *entirely* into *private* devotion and active beneficence, and to these their exertions are therefore confined.

Were the whole human race well educated and virtuous—were they all capable of forming just notions of God and of human duty—did they stand in no need of being reminded of time's rapid flight and eternity's awful approach, and the rewards of obedience, and of disobedience—then all would be right, and society on earth, would be a representation of happiness in Heaven. But we are in a probationary state—our minds as well as bodies are connected with, and influenced by the sphere in which we move, and we require every aid which a wise and benevolent Providence has put in our power, to counteract the impetuosity of our passions, and to rouse us from sinful, and of course dangerous security. The institutions of Christianity are well adapted for these purposes, and are so many means of drawing us to God by the chords of love, and of uniting us to our Lord and Master by the sacred bonds of communion and fellowship. To neglect the due observance of them, is to cast dishonour on him by whom they were appointed, and to set up human wisdom in opposition to divine authority. It must be confessed that many, in other respects amiable characters, are guilty here; and while the general tenor of their conduct deserves unqualified praise, their inattention to some of the *outward* means of growing in grace, throws a shade over examples which would be otherwise bright. But though cowards wear swords, it does not follow that brave men should engage in warfare without them. Though hypocrites and fanatics are formal and ceremonious in religious matters, it does not follow that forms and ceremonies should be utterly discarded by the truly pious and devout. Were this the case, society would soon degenerate into a mass of the most abominable corruptions. Were the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper universally neglected—but more particularly were the *public* worship of God entirely given up, every trace of civilization would gradually vanish from the earth, and deep, and savage barbarism overwhelm the human race. I would therefore call on the liberal and enlightened part of the community, to proclaim in the face of the world, their attachment—that attachment which they

really feel—to the religion of Christ, by a proper and decorous observance of its institutions. Let them cast away that apathy and indifference with which they are sometimes accused, by people less worthy, but more active. Let them free religion from the odium and ridicule flung on it from profane and thoughtless lips, by showing that its duties may be performed, and its ordinances respected, without superstition and without hypocrisy. The Ministers in whose congregations liberality most prevails, are powerfully and successfully exerting themselves to emancipate their people from the trammels of bigotry and priestcraft: let the people show their gratitude, by waiting on their ministry, and let them prove to the world, that in order to be *zealous* it is not *necessary* that they should be *ignorant*, and that religion can be maintained in *public* as well as in *private*—in *appearance* as well as in *practice*, independently of *dupery* and *imposture*.

A. J. J.

Intelligence.

ADDRESS OF THE CORK UNITARIANS TO THE RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

THE recent arrival of this distinguished person in London, has caused much sensation in several places in Europe. Whether his visit to England is caused by political objects, or a desire to become better acquainted with a people, with whom he has kept up so intimate an intercourse for upwards of thirty years, we cannot say. We willingly, however, lay before our numerous readers, the "*Address of the Cork Branch of the Unitarian Christian Society,*" with the *Rajah's reply*. Our Cork friends have acted like themselves; and though coldly treated by some, who should gladly co-operate with them in disseminating the genuine and gracious doctrines of primitive Christianity, they have our warmest regards, and they shall have every countenance which the nature of our Publication can fairly afford.

Rammohun Roy was born in the province of Bengal, is the descendant of a distinguished line of ancestors, is in the 51st year of his age, became a Christian from a diligent examination of the Sacred Scriptures, and has immortalized his name by the publication of "*the Precepts of Jesus the guide to peace and happiness,*" and by his replies to the observations of Dr. Marshman, a Trinitarian Missionary. He concludes his third and final reply to Dr. Marshman, in these words—"after I have long relinquished every idea of a plurality of Gods, or of the persons of the Godhead, taught under

different systems of Hindooism, I cannot conscientiously and consistently embrace one of a similar nature, though greatly refined by the religious reformatations of modern times ; since whatever arguments can be adduced against a plurality of Gods, strike with equal force against the doctrine of a plurality of persons of the Godhead ; and, on the other hand, whatever excuse may be pleaded in favour of a plurality of persons of the Deity, can be offered with equal propriety in defence of Polytheism."

EDITORS.

ADDRESS OF THE CORK BRANCH OF THE UNITARIAN
CHRISTIAN SOCIETY, TO THE RAJAH RAMMOHUN ROY.

May 2nd 1831.

The Unitarian Society of Cork, desire in the sincerity of Christian brotherhood, to welcome your arrival in Great Britain, and to congratulate you upon the impulse which has been given to the dissemination of pure Christianity in the provinces of British India.

As a Christian Society, they view with deep feelings of commiseration the present state of that country, debased by the most superstitious Idolatry, ignorantly worshipping the visible representations of the power and beneficence of God, and almost totally unacquainted with the divine mission and perfect character of Jesus Christ.

Although firmly persuaded that natural, moral inability, will not be punished by that just and merciful Being, who has declared that all men will be judged in proportion to the light they possess, and that in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him:—yet do this Society ardently desire that the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace may shed its benign and auspicious influence, upon a people who yet sit in darkness—that the precepts of Jesus may be acted upon in the daily intercourse of life, and that the capacity for high intellectual and moral improvement which now lies shrouded beneath the dark clouds of idolatrous superstition, may be unfolded before the cheering brightness of the sun of Truth.

Animated by these wishes, it was with feelings of exultation and pious thankfulness, they viewed your efforts to overstep the boundaries of ignorance and darkness, and to declare to your countrymen the consolatory and ennobling truths of Christianity. Your difficulties earned their sympathy, your perseverance demands their warmest praise, and every herald of your progress is hailed with joy and gladness, and claims a tribute of gratitude to that Being, who 'will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.'

From your intercourse with their brethren in England, they anticipate much good, and they look forward to your arrival in Ireland, and probably in this city, with feelings of lively interest. They doubt not it will consolidate the bonds of Christian fellowship, and render reciprocal every feeling of kind affection ; and should the all-wise disposer of events permit your return to your native country, may an intercourse, founded on religious sympathy, long conti-

nue to be maintained ; and may succeeding ages bear testimony to the triumphant progress of a religion whose distinguishing characteristic is—"Peace on earth, good will to men."

Signed—By order of the Committee,

WALTER RICHARDS OSBORNE, Chairman.
WILLIAM CONNELL, Secretary.

125, Regent-street, London, May 28, 1851.

SIR—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 2nd inst., which indisposition prevented me from replying to earlier. I feel highly honoured by the address of welcome and congratulation on my arrival in Europe—sent me by the Unitarian Society of Cork—and beg you will have the goodness to convey to that Society, on my behalf, an expression of the deep sense I entertain of the honour they have conferred upon me.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

RAMMOHUN ROY.

Mr. Walter R. Osborne.

THE REV. DR. BRUCE.

On Friday last, the First Congregation of Presbyterians assembled in their Meeting-house, in this town, for the purpose of presenting a Service of Plate to their venerable Pastor, the Rev. Wm. Bruce, D.D. on his retirement from the more active duties of his charge, (in consequence of the failure of sight,) as a mark of their respectful attachment and regard. Mr. Houston, of Orangefield, having been called to the chair, stated that the plate then produced for inspection had been procured by their Committee, according to their desire, to be presented to their venerable and highly esteemed Pastor and Friend. The Chairman hoped the Committee had succeeded in performing their task so as to meet the approbation of the Congregation and the other subscribers ; in the selection, they had been much indebted to the good taste of Mr. Callwell. The Chairman then said, that the meeting having done him the honour of requesting he would present this memorial to Dr. Bruce, he had much pleasure in doing so ; and begged his acceptance of it, on behalf of the Congregation and other subscribers, as a mark of their warm attachment to him as a Minister and a friend, accompanied by their sincere regret at the melancholy visitation of Providence, which had been the means of depriving them of his more active service as a Pastor. The Chairman concluded by reading the following inscription on a large salver, on the back of which the names of the subscribers were engraved :—

THIS SALVER,
 WITH A SUITABLE SERVICE OF PLATE,
 WAS PRESENTED BY THE MEMBERS
 OF THE
 FIRST CONGREGATION OF PRESBYTERIANS,
 IN BELFAST,
 (AS A MEMORIAL OF THEIR AFFECTIONATE REGARD,)
 TO
 WILLIAM BRUCE, D. D.
 THEIR SENIOR MINISTER,

Who, after faithfully labouring among them in the work of the Ministry for the period of forty-one years, and maintaining, by his character as a man, his eminence as a preacher, and his ability as an author, the great principles of Christian liberty, was obliged, by a failure of sight, to retire from the active duties of the pastoral office, in the 74th year of his age, on the first of May, 1331.

After Mr. Houston had presented the Plate, Dr. Bruce spoke as follows:—

“Sir, before I address the congregation, it is incumbent on me to make my acknowledgments to you for the partial terms in which you have executed your commission. These flattering expressions I receive with pleasure; not as my due, for they greatly exceed my merits, but as the overflowings of a friendship of long standing, sincere and constant, well becoming the worthy representative of that excellent man, your uncle, and my most valued friend, for a series of years, a ‘pillar’ in this church. Gal. xi. 9.

“Dear and honoured friends, you have released me from your service, laden with honours and rewards, according well with your kind and liberal character, but wholly disproportioned to my deserts. These, I can truly say, have seldom been estimated more lowly by any one than myself. I have often blushed at praises, to which I felt, that I had no claim, and been humbled by honours, highly redounding to my reputation. My failings have been viewed with unmerited lenity and indulgence by my friends; and, if I have had any enemies, I have been more indebted to their ignorance of my faults than wronged by the severity of their censures. But under a deep sense of manifold imperfections, I have supported myself with the consciousness, that, during a long life, I have uniformly adhered to my ruling principles, the maintenance of civil and religious liberty, and the vindication of gospel truth, to the best of my ability and knowledge. These principles you have recognized as mine, and most justly claim as your own; and, in the assertion of them, in the most trying times, I gratefully acknowledge, that I have been zealously supported and animated by my people.

“In my professional capacity, I have consoled myself for my deficiencies by the declaration of Paul, that there are “diversities of gifts,” to be exercised by ministers, each according to the grace given unto him. There were apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. “Are all apostles?” says St. Paul, “are all prophets? are all teachers? do all speak with tongues? do all inter-

pret? To some was given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge; to one faith, to another the interpretation of tongues. Some had the office of ministering, others of exhortation, and others of rulling; and every man was to cultivate the gift that was in him." This is still the state of the Christian church. Some ministers excel in preaching and conducting the public offices of devotion; others are endowed with popular manners, and talents for making a shining figure in the world; and for supporting our cause with a ready eloquence against "adversaries and gainsayers." Some are resolute and commanding, capable of exercising authority; others modest and gentle, persuasive and soothing. *We* should covet earnestly the best gifts; but all members have not the same office. Congregations too should make allowances for defects, and look to the general advantage of religion, and the church to which they belong, as well as to their own peculiar circumstances. In this respect you, agreeably to the rank you hold among Dissenters, have set an example, in the choice of your ministers from the earliest times of the Presbyterian church. If I have been serviceable in any of these departments, I humbly hope to obtain pardon for my failures and omissions in others. To one of these omissions it is necessary now to advert.

"It is generally and justly expected, that a minister shall not resign his charge without a valedictory address from the pulpit to his people, without some token of affection, some word of exhortation; or, perhaps some vindication of the step he is about to take. A parting, even between two friends, has a tendency to revive their tenderness, to cement their union, and to recall scenes in which they have been mutually edified or endeared; and the neglect of this mark of regard is often a source of chagrin to the party left behind, and of regret to him, who has declined so easy and grateful an office. I trust, it is evident to all, that my omission of this laudable practice was involuntary; and my compliance with it, in a manner worthy of the occasion, I found to be impracticable.

"It sometimes happens, however, that this task is rendered less pleasing by the discontent of the parties, the one imputing blame, the other labouring a vindication; and surely an affectionate flock have reason to complain, when their pastor relinquishes his solemn and important trust upon frivolous or sordid considerations. It is my joy and pride, that, on three such occasions in the course of my ministry, nothing of this kind has ever occurred. In the present instance, particularly as the necessity of my resignation was unquestionable, so have the cordiality and esteem of both parties, (I may now say,) been unabating to the last. These it shall be my study and ambition to cherish to the end of my life. With these feelings, and under these convictions, I can most thankfully, and without scruple, accept of this splendid testimonial, equally honourable to the givers and the receiver. This memorial of your attachment and respect, will soothe the encroaching infirmities of age, and cheer the gathering gloom.

"Dearly beloved brethren, the situation in which you have placed me this day, has beguiled me into the garrulity of age, and I have indulged it by speaking too much of myself, and too little of you.

Were I, indeed, to dwell on every topic that presents itself, my strength would fail, and your patience be exhausted. Some of these are of a melancholy hue, when I turn my thoughts to times long since gone by, or traverse the bounds of this congregation, in town or country, and survey the dwellings of departed friends, I seem to myself to be walking among tombs. When I cast my eyes round this assembly, I can see but two or three still surviving, of all those who subscribed my call; but I am cheered by the sight of a numerous company whom I baptised, educated and married, now adorning their vocation in the various walks of life, many in the full maturity of years, and blessed with a progeny, reared under my ministry, and walking in the steps of their parents. When I look abroad, I behold a mighty ferment working in the minds of men, soon, I hope, to subside into a purer and more tranquil state.—When I anticipate futurity, “I see Satan, like lightning falling from heaven;” old dilapidated churches, undergoing a thorough repair upon a better model; fanatical and superstitious sects, impressing the multitude with serious, though erroneous convictions of religion, unwittingly infusing a spirit of inquiry, and thus preparing them for a more liberal and charitable faith; and I view this congregation bearing its part in the “restitution” of genuine religion, at peace with all around them, and united among themselves in “faith, hope, and charity.” Brethren, the religious world is mouldering and fashioning in the hand of God. He is erecting a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. Old things are passing away, and behold, all things are becoming new. Men are growing wiser than their teachers, and more powerful than their spiritual rulers. Even the ponderous fabric of the Roman church, is mouldering at the base, and toppling to its fall.

“Particular churches may flourish or decay. Doctrines may be extinguished and revive; but our fundamental principles, the sufficiency of scripture and the right of private judgment, the rejection of human authority and universal charity are unchangeable, and have been espoused by the most enlightened portion of society; and our doctrinal opinions are spreading far and wide among intelligent people in every church.

“There is a great work going on, and we are the only denomination of christians, at liberty to hail and to promote its progress unshackled by human creeds, unawed by priestly domination and spiritual power. That man must stop his ears, close his eyes, and stultify his mind, who does not perceive the promise and progress of a great moral and religious improvement in the condition of the world. Who, even the youngest among us, could a few years ago, have hoped to see, in the course of a long life, what has already taken place? and what experienced person has not observed that every step facilitates another.

“The philosophical christian is imbibing zeal from the enthusiast, and the fanatic is moderated by the rational believer: the sceptic is the involuntary instrument of establishing certainty, and the infidel of confirming faith. All work together for good, unconscious agents in producing a glorious effect. Consider yourselves, my beloved friends, as appointed to act a distinguished part in this won-

derful series of events, as a link in the chain that will finally draw earth to Heaven. Mean while, be not ye conformed to the world, for the world is coming round to you; and those who forsake you will be despised and forsaken in their turn. Fear not little flock, it is Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. ii.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE.

The Trustees of this Association have appointed the Rev. W. Porter, of Newtownlimavady, Rev. J. Mitchel, of Newry, Rev. H. Montgomery, of Dunmurry, and Rev. F. Blakely, of Moneyrea, to solicit contributions in South Britain, in aid of its Funds. The Deed of Trust is now completed,—printed copies of it should be widely circulated, and immediate application made to the advocates of religious liberty in every congregation in Ireland.

It is stated, on good authority, that the meeting of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster is postponed until after the return of the deputation from England.

Public notice will, of course, be given of the time of the postponed meeting. The latter end of August, or the beginning of September is named, as the most probable period.

OBITUARY.

On June 1st, Mr. Robert Patterson, of Belfast, in the 81st year of his age.

On June 2d, Mrs. Margaret Hyndman, relict of the late Andrew Hyndman, of Belfast, aged 72 years.

At his house, Donegall-Square, Belfast, on the 16th June, John Sloan, Esq.

Of inflammatory fever, on the 20th of June, the Rev. Arthur Neilson, of Kilmore, in the 46th year of his age.

After receiving an excellent classical education under the care of his father, Dr. Moses Neilson, and his brother Dr. William Neilson, afterwards of Belfast College, he pursued his studies at the University of Glasgow, where he gained the highest approbation of the professors on account of his application and attainments, and secured the affection of all his fellow students by his amiable dispositions. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Antrim, and was ordained by the Presbytery of Armagh, as assistant and successor to his Father, on the 13th June, 1810. He continued also to conduct the Kilmore Academy, which both in his day and in his Father's produced many distinguished scholars. No minister ever laboured more among his people, nor was any man ever more beloved by all around him.

On the 27th of June last, at her house in Holywood, Mrs. Rebecca Beatty, in the 87th year of her age. She was only daughter of the late Rev. John Beatty, minister of the First Presbyterian Congregation of that place. Strongly attached to the Unitarian system of Christianity, she lived respected and beloved, and died full of resignation and Godly hope.

THE
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AUGUST, 1831.

VOL. II.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SECOND LETTER TO A LITERARY LADY.

DEAR MADAM,—I see, that my letter has got into print, and suspect, that it may call forth some critical and philosophical strictures ; but as I hate controversy, I shall confine myself to such points, as may arise in our correspondence. Your own remarks do great credit to your judgment and temper ; and I am particularly gratified by your desire, that I may explain myself more fully on Conscience, to which I briefly alluded in the conclusion of my last as a peculiar instinct of man, and to give my reasons for differing from late opinions on that subject. Your wish is always a command to me ; but you must allow me the latitude usually conceded to epistolatory writing, and some indulgence, if I differ from you on any favourite question. It is natural, that you should set a high value on knowledge so recently acquired, though on further consideration you may find intellectual philosophy less certain and satisfactory than any other science ; and yet, it is humiliating to reflect on the narrow bounds, within which they are all confined.

Even natural science, in which we have made the greatest advances, is limited to effects produced by what we call Secondary, but which might, with more propriety, be denominated Subordinate Causes ; for it would be unwarrantable and presumptuous to suppose, that we had ascertained the immediate instruments employed by the Creator. The most general law of nature that we have discovered, may only be the consequence of another more general. Even Gravitation, as was conjectured by Newton, may be the operation of some elementary principle. Our progress in knowledge

resembles the ascent of an aëronaut in his balloon. The higher he soars, the more he sees ; but the more sensible does he become of the vast variety of objects, that are obscurely perceived, and of the immense expanse that lies beyond his view. Thus our increase of knowledge only serves to convince us of the still wider extent of our ignorance. When from unorganized matter we proceed to contemplate the growth and dissemination of vegetables, we are lost in wonder and ignorance. The nature of animal life, even of the meanest order, is involved in tenfold darkness. What life itself is, either in animals or plants, no man can tell ; for it is altogether independent of ourselves. The microcosm, or little world within us, is incessantly carrying on its complicated operations without either the activity or consent of the mind. We can trace the organs and process of circulation and respiration, digestion, secretion and absorption, and can discover microscopic tissues of nerves and fibres, continually at work, all kept in action by life ; but life itself is a mysterious principle, which equally eludes the penetration of the metaphysician, the microscope, and the anatomical knife.—When we speculate on the essence and properties of human and superior spirits, we perceive that we are hovering on the borders of a new world. And even when each individual looks into his own mind and examines its perceptions and powers, its affections and passions, its sentimental, intellectual and moral faculties, and even the involuntary operations or intentional movements of his body, he feels that every thing is inexplicable. He finds, that those sensations and imaginations, capacities, propensities and functions, which he calls his own, are utterly unintelligible to him, and frequently independent of his direction or control.

The avenues, by which the ideas of corporeal objects are conveyed to the mind, cannot be traced beyond the internal organ of sense, or at furthest to the brain. How these ideas are afterwards laid up in the memory, as in a cabinet, from which they frequently issue, uncalled for, sometimes are selected by the understanding, and at others cannot be extracted by the most anxious and painful recollection ; yet, again present themselves spontaneously and unexpected :—how they are generalized, combined and separated ;—by what mysterious fa-

culty they are compared, and associated ; by what curious operation they engender, the various productions in science moral and natural, history natural and civil, in taste and genius, and on political and commercial business : all these things are as incomprehensible to the sublimest genius, as to the most ignorant and stupid of his kind. The finest capacity for executing such works, gives no insight in to the manner in which they are effected, beyond a few elementary and mechanical rules. It was to intellectual philosophy that the oracle alluded, when it pronounced a certain philosopher to be the wisest of men, because he knew, that he knew nothing. I fear, that none of our philosophers would accept of the compliment.

The nature and effects of our appetites, affections and passions, are more open to examination than the operations of our intellectual powers : but their connexion with the habit, health and texture of our bodily frame is still more unaccountable.

But the most striking observation of all others is, that in the same individual and indivisible mind, there should be an internal conflict : that our appetites and passions should wage war with our moral principles, and with various success ; so as sometimes to come off victorious, and sometimes suffer defeat : that the interests and wishes of the contending powers should be as different as if they were separate minds. See Rom. vii. 15.

I have said that this last reflection is the most surprising of those that have yet occurred : but there is a circumstance yet remaining which surpasses in wonder and in use. I mean the judgment which we afterwards form upon a review of these conflicts, and the remorse or self-satisfaction by which it is followed. The power, by which we form this judgment, and which is accompanied with these sensations is denominated Conscience, and by some the Moral Sense. This faculty is the origin of all our moral perceptions. It furnishes the principles from which all our conclusions concerning virtue and vice are drawn. Philosophers have widely and obstinately differed concerning the ultimate end, to which the dictates of conscience may be referred ; but those dictates when once ascertained, are admitted to be conclusive. Dispassionate people seldom differ concerning the objects of praise and blame ; when the subject is

simple and clearly stated : but concerning the reason of their approbation or disapprobation they may disagree. The Conscience of every man will pronounce pretty nearly the same sentence ; yet each may ground it upon a different principle. One may lay the foundation of virtue in benevolence or general utility ; another, on a refined selfishness ; one on the nature of things ; another on the will of God ; yet all approve or condemn the same actions. But many actions and sentiments we at once pronounce to be right or wrong by the instinctive force of Conscience. Without seeking a reason for our opinion in their tendency to promote the glory of God, the happiness of man, or the present or remote advantage of the agent, we perceive that they are essentially right.

It is happy for us, and most wisely ordered by our maker, that the discovery of right and wrong does not depend on such perplexed reasonings. Otherwise neither the ignorant multitude, nor contending philosophers could have any sure guide for their conduct. Therefore is the distinction of right and wrong rendered so clear as to be intuitively discerned. But you think, that the operation of this faculty is the effect of reason ; and the remark is certainly very worthy of consideration. This distinction between right and wrong, is eternal and immutable ; but there will be a variety in the operation of this instinct, as of others, which do not come into use till called for, at that season and by those circumstances in life, in which their aid is necessary. You will admit maternal affection to be an innate principle in the female mind ; and that the tenderness of a mother for her new-born babe is not the consequence of reasoning. It exists as strongly in animals destitute of reason, as in the human species. It does not originate in sympathy between those of the same kind ; for they will suckle and fondle the young of a different, and even a hostile species, the object of their terror on other occasions : nor does it arise from the sight of a helpless creature, for birds display the same regard for their eggs ; and a hen shows the same anxiety for the safety of her ducklings, when they take to their natural element, which is another instinct, as if her chicks were to plunge into the water. Now if innate propensities exist in other animals, it is natural

and agreeable to the uniformity of Providence, to expect to find them in man.

But your objection, you say, refers more particularly to the different sentiments and practices of mankind. As to their actions you are sensible, that *their* character depends on the motive or intention, from which they proceed. The actions of an executioner and a murderer, or a surgeon and an inquisitor are alike. The external act must therefore be left out of our consideration ; and the only question is, as to the uniformity of the moral sentiments of mankind. This is not to be answered by a selection of instances of depraved individuals, or communities ; but by adducing such testimony as we can collect, concerning the sense of mankind in general.

As to the individuals and societies, it is agreed that Conscience may be perverted and overpowered by sensual and irascible passions ; and, for a time, be suppressed by ambition, avarice and other selfish propensities. But did you ever hear of any who calmly approved of treachery and ingratitude, or condemned integrity and benevolence ? When David and Brutus sentenced their sons to death, and Jephtha and Agamemnon devoted their daughters, does any one imagine that they were destitute of conscience or natural affection ? or that in these respects they differed from other men ? On the contrary, their sense of duty got the better of their natural affections, and they were actuated by the same patriotism and piety, that are applauded by all. These are convincing instances of the strength and general prevalence of moral principle. This is so uniform, that the knave is obliged to counterfeit simplicity and honesty, to carry on his plans of deceit ; and the hypocrite bears daily testimony to the general esteem for piety and virtue.

The savage, who puts his aged and decrepid father to death, when unable to provide for his own support, or to accompany the tribe in their hunting, or hostile expeditions, does not conceive parricide to be an innocent act ; but he thinks that he acts a kinder part by inflicting an easy death, followed by a happier state of being, than by suffering his parent to pine in misery and want, and finally perish in torment by the hand of an enemy, or be devoured alive by the jaws of a wild beast. Imagine to yourself a wretched mother casting her infant

into the flames to Moloch, or under the chariot wheels of Juggernaut ; her tears and cries evince her anguish, nor does she believe that cruelty is right ! but in opposition to the conviction of her conscience, and the pangs of maternal affection, she sacrifices her child to the inexorable cruelty of an imaginary being, in obedience to the dictates of an absurd, but in her a pious superstition. This variety and perversion take place in other instincts as well as conscience.

You admit, that a general uniformity prevails in our own country ; and that many enormities arise from ignorance, false judgment, and erroneous principle. This is candid, and, I think, fair and true ; but you require me to show, that this has been the case in foreign countries and remote ages, because uniformity of sentiment in one country, may be accounted for by similarity of institutions, laws and manners. This may appear a hard task ; yet I shall undertake it.

The minute and characteristic narratives of the Old Testament, display a similarity of moral sentiment from the creation. The poetical, didactic and prophetic pieces, are grounded on the same supposition. Our Lord takes this consistency for granted in all his precepts and parables ; and St. Paul says, that conscience was a law to the Gentiles, antecedent to the Revelation. The attentive reader of Homer is surprised at the uniformity of sentiment in those early times, and the present continually showing itself in the Iliad and Odyssey. The whole train of historians, ancient and modern, record the actions of a race corresponding in their convictions and feelings on moral subjects.

This appears in the transactions and incidents recorded, but particularly in the speeches, which they ascribe to their characters. This is more evidently conspicuous in the ancient orators, the essence of whose art consists in maintaining a sympathy between themselves and their hearers. Satirists and panegyrists also afford us an insight into the sentiments that obtained in their days. We may collect the ideas of mankind, even from Novels and other works of fiction, that have been generally read. Of this kind, dramatical compositions are the principal. There is no species of writing, that lets us more thoroughly into the state of the public mind, and especially of the lower orders of socie-

ty, in different ages. Theatrical spectacles have always been favourite amusements. In ancient times, they were frequented by innumerable multitudes from different countries. They could expect no success, except they held a mirror up to nature, to show the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice. From the strain of these exhibitions, we can ascertain the moral judgment of men. This has always been consistent, uniform and honourable to our nature. At this day the lowest rabble often break out into applause of noble sentiments, and vent their indignation aloud upon base and infamous characters. By all these means, we may be assured of the uniformity of conscience in succeeding periods and distant nations, even from the beginning of the world; and it thus appears, that, allowing for occasional variations, already accounted for, the dictates of the moral sense, have coincided with reason, truth, the fitness of things, and the will of God, being like them, the issue of his wisdom, and the instinct by which they are made known.

In short, Conscience is uniform and certain; Reason variable and ever liable to error. It is the office of Conscience to check the wanderings of Reason on morality; though often suppressed and silenced by her delusive arguments and false opinions. "It is reason that presents a false notion to the moral faculty: the fault is in the opinion and not in the moral sense. No man contends that we are not uniform in self-love, because we sometimes choose things hurtful." *Hutcheson's Mor. Phil.* If Conscience be only a mode of reasoning, then sin is only an error of judgment, and the practice of vice, a bad speculation.

In this long letter, I have availed myself of the liberty, which I claimed. But though I have presumed so much on your indulgence, there are several points of great interest and importance, upon which you may expect to hear from me by the next opportunity.

Yours most respectfully.

ERASMUS.

ERRATA IN LAST NUMBER.

Page 284, line 18, Read *On Friday the 17th of June.* Page 287. line 24, for *mouldering*, Read *moulding—and creating for erecting*, Page 288 line 5, Read *your Fathers.*

NOTE TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF SIR
ISAAC NEWTON, BY DR. THOMAS THOMSON.

Taken from the Annals of Philosophy, Vol. 2, Oct. 1813.

“I have heard it affirmed by some of the self-constituted philosophers of the present day, that Sir Isaac Newton believed the Christian religion merely because he was born in a Christian country; that he never examined it; and that he left behind him a cart-load of papers on religious subjects, which Dr. Horsley examined, and declared unfit for publication.

“These gentlemen do not perceive that their assertions are inconsistent with each other. Nobody who has ever read a page of Newton’s works would believe that he could write a cart-load of papers on a subject which he never examined. Newton’s religious opinions were not orthodox; for example, he did not believe in the trinity. This gives us the reason why Horsley, the champion of the trinity, found Newton’s papers unfit for publication. But it is much to be regretted that they have never seen the light.”

Extracts from Bishop Watson’s Preface to his Theological Tracts.

“What, shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every sect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves, and less despicably of others? To believe that the Father of the universe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic theologies; but that every one, who, with an honest intention, and to the best of his ability seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him? I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles, but the principles of truth; and truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful in his endeavours, who examines, with candor and care, what can be urged on each side of a greatly controverted question.”

This sort of examination may, in some instances, produce a doubt, a hesitation, a diffident suspension of judgment, but it will at the same time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards those who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our understanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion; and a forward propensity to be angry with those who question the validity of our principles, or deny the justness of our conclusions, in any matter respecting philosophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on fashion, fancy, interest; on the unexamined tenets of our family, sect, or party; on any thing rather than on the solid foundation of cool and dispassionate reasoning.

“If different men in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance, we trust that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be *revealed* concerning the *nature* of the Son, or *commanded* concerning the *honor* to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle. The fear of God; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven.”

ON PRAYER.

As through the pathless fields of air
Wander'd forth the timid dove,
So the heart in humble prayer,
Essays to reach the throne of love.

Like her it may return unblest,
Like her again may soar,
And still return and find no rest,
No peaceful happy shore.

But now once more she spreads her wings,
And takes a bolder flight,

And see, the olive branch she brings,
To bless her master's sight.

And thus the heart renews its strength
Though spent and tempest driven,
And higher soars, and brings at length,
A pledge of peace with heaven.

Boston Christian Teacher's Manual.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

How sweet to be allowed to pray
To God the holy One,
With filial love and trust to say
"Father thy will be done."

We in these sacred words can find
A cure for every ill,
They calm and sooth the troubled mind,
And bid all care be still.

Oh let that will, which gave me breath
And an immortal soul,
In joy or grief, in life or death,
My every wish control.

O could my heart thus ever pray,
With joy life's course would run;
Teach me, oh God, with truth to say
"Thy will, not mine, be done."

Boston Christian Teacher's Manual, vol. 1, page 126.

ON THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD.

IN almost every country, religion in some shape or other, is to be met with, and men every where seem to be impressed with a belief in the existence of some power or powers superior to themselves. In some regions of the earth, human nature appears sunk to the very lowest state of degradation, and the inhabitants are little superior in the scale of intellectual acquirement, to the beasts that perish. We find them in a great measure destitute of knowledge, total strangers to the arts and sciences, and ignorant of those conveniences which render existence supportable; yet even in such situations, and under such circumstances, the temple and the worshipper are to be found. True indeed, the religion of such people is very absurd, and often very barbarous, but still it proves that there is a feeling in the heart of man, which leads him, in some form or other, to worship the God or Gods of his faith.

We, to whom the sublime doctrines of Christianity have been revealed, are too apt to look with detestation and contempt on such worshippers, and by many they have been considered unworthy the rights and privileges of men. But we should never forget, that we are all children of the same father, and that, had not the mercies of God placed *us* under the reign of the gospel, we would have been as worthless as others, and as incapable of rising by our own efforts to any degree of superior excellence. And it may be asked, do we avail ourselves of the advantages which, as Christians we enjoy? and do we show our gratitude to the giver of every perfect gift, by a cheerful obedience to his commandments, and by a willing and attentive observance of those institutions which he has appointed as means of grace and guides to glory? It will be found that this is not the case, and it will be found that there are many called Christians, who though they live in a Christian land, are educated in the religion of Christ, are called after his name, and acknowledge him in words, are, notwithstanding, as complete strangers to the spirit of his religion, and to the influence of his doctrines, as if they had been born amidst heathen darkness, and as if the word of life was never read, or preached in their land. We might suppose, that to dedicate one day in seven, to the more immediate worship of our God, could not be considered an irksome, or laborious duty; and yet it is a duty very much over-looked by many, and totally neglected by some. We might suppose, that beings endowed with reason and understanding, and continually enjoying the bounty and blessings of Jehovah, would gladly go to his temple, and on the day which he has appropriated to himself, would delight to "enter his courts with praise, and his gates with thanksgiving, to worship him in the beauty of holiness, and to give the honour due to his name." As, however, this is not the case, I shall endeavour, briefly to show the reasonableness, and importance of the practice.

I.—To whatever quarter we turn our eyes, on whatever portion of the Almighty's works we allow our contemplations to dwell—whether we meditate on the manifestations of that power, which stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and "spread them forth as a tent

to dwell in"—which raised the lofty mountains above the clouds—circumscribed the waters of the mighty deep, and gave a living population to the interminable expanse of his empire—whether we reflect on that wisdom which planned the immense fabric of the universe, and which still continues to watch over and direct the springs of nature—or whether we consider the exuberance of his love—the overflowing measure of his compassion and benevolence to the children of men—in all, and in each, we may clearly discern attributes, and perceptions, calculated to raise us from the slumbers of forgetfulness, and to fill us with reverence, gratitude, and love. Those feelings, if left to their free operation, would certainly lead us to the house of prayer, and teach us to raise our hearts, and our voices in adoration to the most high. But the pursuits in which we are engaged—the cares and pleasures of the world—the temptations which assail us—the trials to which we are exposed, and the impetuosity of our own passions, all conspire to rub off the sacred impressions of religion, and to make us *forget* the obligations we are under to our father in heaven.

I would therefore *remind* you my fellow Christians, of the power, and wisdom, and goodness displayed in your own formation—of your high and lofty endowments—of your capability of raising your meditations to the throne of Omnipotence—of mingling your worship with that of celestial spirits, and of thus holding intercourse with God himself.

I would remind you of that Providence which watches over your safety and peace—which encompasses your beds and your path—which has led you from the days of infant feebleness, to the present hour which gives prosperity to your exertions, and permits you to taste the pleasures of existence—which gives you a seed-time and a harvest, and makes your hearts to rejoice in the possession of good things.

I would remind you of that compassion and benevolence manifested to a guilty world, in the mission of Jesus Christ—I would remind you, that the fate of man could not affect the happiness of God—that the united efforts of men and devils, of earth and hell, could not endanger his empire, nor shake the foundations of his throne—that it was mercy alone, that led him unsolici-

ted, unimplored, to lay help on one who is mighty and able to save, and to bring you from darkness and death to the prospects and to the enjoyment of light and everlasting life. I would remind you my friends of those important matters, and I would call on you, if not dead to gratitude—if not lost to the best feelings of human nature—if not sunk into hardened apathy, to show the sense you entertain of what you owe to the Lord your God, by regularly repairing to his holy place, and magnifying his name together.

II.—The public worship of God is one of the principal means of promoting, and preserving morality in the land. Man is formed for society, but society engenders vice, and depravity holds on its fatal march with population. Hence, were it not that institutions of a counteracting tendency interposed their influence, corruption would spread rapidly, and scatter its deadly infection through all the walks of life.

The observance of public worship is an admirable expedient to stop the progress of wickedness—to root out the unhallowed desires of the heart, and to store it with good resolutions, pious principles, virtuous and honourable sentiments.

When, on the day which is holy to the Lord, we withdraw from the tumults and bustle of life, and present ourselves before his throne, as supplicants for mercy, and candidates for favor; when the spirit of devotion descends on our souls, and we prostrate our hearts before the God of the universe, we will surely feel the influence of unaffected piety, and impressed with a deep and solemn devotion, we will be led to exclaim with the Patriarch of old, “surely the Lord is in this place—this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Such impressions indeed may, in many cases be but transient, for they are liable to be defaced by business or pleasure—by the operations of avarice, ambition, or folly; but yet in general, some holy feeling—some pious resolution—some “fond desire—some longing after immortality,” will remain, and bear up the soul triumphant, through the trials and temptations of time. Look into the records of our country and say, who are the unhappy wretches that fall victims to violated laws, and offended justice? who are the debased and degraded among men, that sink into

blackened guilt, and suffer the most disgraceful punishment, whose lives are infamous, and whose deaths are untimely and shameful? With a few exceptions they are those who began their career of depravity by neglecting the house of prayer—by turning their backs on the temple of Jehovah, by devoting his day to idleness, folly, and crime. This is almost the uniform confession of them all, when brought to the termination of their ill-spent lives. They avow, that a neglect of the public worship of God, was the commencement of their guilty course—that never having learned the restraints of religion, they were soon led to despise its institutions—that they made a mock of holy things, and scoffed at the ordinances of Christ—that they gradually trampled on the laws of God and man, until the hand of vengeance overtook them, and the dungeon and the gibbet closed up the path of their crimes. This consideration ought to be a warning to us, and should teach us to avail ourselves of those means of growing in grace and goodness which our merciful Father has placed in our reach.

III.—A regular attendance on the public worship of God, is perhaps one of the most effectual means of preparing us for heaven.

When we are assembled in the Lord's house, and as it were more immediately under his inspection, when in the fervency of spirit we offer up to him the tribute of our adoration, and implore grace to help us in time of need, when the united voice of our thanksgiving and praise, ascends to his glorious majesty, our hearts and souls will feel the sacred glow of piety—will spurn away the vanities and follies of our mortal state, and will soar on the eagle wings of faith to our father in heaven.

By seizing the opportunities that present themselves of having those feelings often impressed, and the impressions often repeated, a habit of holiness is wrought into the soul—its perceptions of duty become clearer and quicker—the wisdom which is from above, is more effectually felt, and more joyfully acknowledged—it rises superior to the corrupting influence of the world, and thus the sincere servant of God becomes qualified to enjoy the high station for which he was at first intended, and to share the exalted glories of heaven.

This duty my friends is not an irksome or laborious employment—it demands no great or important sacri-

fice—it takes no bullock from your pasture, nor sheep from your fold.—It is a duty which in time becomes even pleasant, and which in the course of its performance will enable you to say with the pious of old—“a day in thy courts is better than a thousand—I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

I would therefore, my fellow Christians, recommend to you all, a punctual and regular discharge of this duty ; and I would more particularly entreat parents and guardians, to bring up their little ones, and those intrusted to their care, under an habitual regard for the public worship of God. It will be the means under his blessing, of making them grow up all that a parent's heart, or friends' desire could ask—it will build them up in that holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord—it will be a crown of glory in their old age—it will smooth the pillow of their death bed—brighten the gloom of the grave, and place them in joy before the Eternal Throne.

N. O. P.

ON HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY.

OUR first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the command of God, in eating the forbidden fruit ; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.

Assembly's Catechism.

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

Confession of Faith.

Original sin is conveyed from our first parents to their posterity, by natural generation.

Assembly's Catechism.

The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are by nature children of wrath, and bond slaves of Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world,—and the most grievous torments in soul and body in hell-fire for ever.

Assembly's Catechism.

The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually.

Ibid.

The above extracts contain the doctrine of original sin, as stated by the Westminster assembly of divines, and taught by the Orthodox Presbyterian churches of the United Kingdom. Of so much importance are the works of these divines considered, that a belief in the Confession of Faith is substituted by those churches, as a test of ministerial eligibility in preference to the scriptures; and the shorter catechism is more assiduously impressed upon the minds of their youth, than the words of him who "spoke as never man spake." It would exceed the limits of this publication, to enter at large into the details of this subject. All that can be expected is a passing notice, to call the attention of the reader to its examination, as every candid inquiry must necessarily have a tendency to explode a doctrine, invented by the ingenuity of a crafty priesthood, to support their power and influence over the minds of the laity;— a doctrine opposed alike to scripture and reason; derogatory to the character of the Almighty, and opposed to his distinguishing attributes, of justice, mercy, and love. To suppose that the Almighty parent of all good, would leave his rational offspring, whom he created in his own likeness, to the artifice of a powerful and malignant being, to practise upon their innocency and inexperience, and then to doom them to the most grievous torments of body and mind in this world, and their bodies and souls to "the pains of hell-fire for ever," is an imputation against the mercy and goodness of a gracious God, too horrible to be admitted by any rational mind. But the imputation is heightened to an incalculable extent, if we admit the enormous charge against his justice of consigning to everlasting perdition myriads of beings, who, unconscious of any offence, were involved in the same misery, without having given way to any temptation of that unrelenting and subtle spirit, whose practices involved our first parents in guilt and wo. Had the al-

mighty, after suitable warnings to guard our first parents against the wiles of Satan, doomed *them* to the denounced punishment, after they had committed the offence, and before they had propagated the race of—as the supporters of this doctrine affirm—guilty mortals, then his justice had remained unimpeached. To respite, or pardon a criminal, after committing an offence for which a severe punishment had been awarded, would be an act of grace and mercy, not inconsistent with justice; but to spare an offender until he had propagated a numerous progeny, and afterwards to inflict the penalty upon those who were wholly unconscious of any participation in the crime, would be unreasonable, and unjust in the highest degree, and repugnant to every feeling of mercy, love, and goodness. Is it possible that such things could proceed from that being whom an inspired apostle of the Lord Jesus emphatically designates by the appellation of LOVE.

That a doctrine, so dishonourable to God, and pernicious to man, could have been so generally propagated and believed among Christians, would be wholly unaccountable, did we not know the propensity of the ignorant and unreflecting to swallow with avidity every extravagant fiction; and of the learned to propagate absurd systems, and exert their ingenuity in supporting them. Of all the errors by which mankind have been abused, the religion of Christ disgraced, or its benign influence upon the human race retarded, the doctrine of hereditary depravity appears to be the most pernicious. It is like false premises which vitiate all subsequent reasoning; or rather, like a poisoned fountain polluting the waters that issue from it, and carrying destruction to all who partake of its venomous streams. It is the corner stone of Calvin's Theological system, and is weaker in point of scriptural evidence, than the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is, like other dogmas of that Antiscriptural medley of absurdities, deduced from a few detached portions of scripture,* which, in their natural connection, are plain and easily understood; but which, by forced interpretations, have been compelled to give a deceitful evidence in favour of a doctrine, not

* For an exposition of these texts, see Bible Christian for April 1831, page 111.

only unacknowledged by the sacred writers, but in many passages in direct contradiction to their plainest dictates. That man is *under the wrath and curse of God*, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly and continually inclined to all evil, is an assertion opposed to our every day's experience, and unsupported by scripture. Where is the record of God's laying a curse upon the human race, or of putting them under the ban of his displeasure? We read in the bible that the serpent for beguiling the woman was cursed above all the beasts of the field; that the woman was subjected to multiplied sorrows, conceptions, and in her desires to her husband; and that he should rule over her; and that the man was doomed, for his transgression, to till the unpropitious soil, and at last to return to his native dust; but no mention is made by the sacred historian of God subjecting him and his posterity to his wrath and curse. To the assertion, "That men are disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly and continually inclined to all evil," can be opposed the most convincing of all proofs,—the evidence of our senses. Even the most atrocious villain will intermit the prosecution of his diabolical plans, and giving way to the more refined and better workings of his nature, relax his mind and body by a cessation of his wickedness, and indulge occasionally in virtuous and benevolent conduct. The truth is, perfection is no attribute of human nature. The most virtuous have their frailties, their follies, and their besetting sins, by which they are sometimes overtaken; while the most vicious are sometimes capable of performing a noble and generous action.

The advocates for hereditary depravity assert, that the prevalence of evil in the world cannot be accounted for on any other principle, than that of the depravity of our nature, in consequence of the fall of Adam; and that all actual transgression proceeds from thence. It would appear from their anxiety to establish their system, that they have overlooked what might reasonably be considered the chief cause, i. e. the influence of evil example, the force of habit, the negligence of parents and guardians, in forming the minds of their children to virtue in early years, and the bad education which is the result of the combination of these causes. Solomon was a more accurate observer than our modern or-

thodox guides ; and so far from asserting that human nature was perverted by the fall, indisposed to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, that he has assured us *if we train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.* Here the force of habit, in establishing good principles, is roundly asserted ; and the scriptures are equally explicit concerning the power of bad habits : for we are told, that it is as easy for the Ethiop to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as for those who have been accustomed to do evil to learn to do well ; which is, in other words, asserting the moral impossibility of changing our acquired habits. Indeed, so strongly are men persuaded of their power, in forming the character and conduct of individuals, that it has become an established maxim, in which the sense of mankind is uniformly agreed, that *custom is a second nature.* So far is the sacred historian from charging the corruption and depravity of mankind to the fall, that the cause of the flood is ascribed, not to the corruption of our nature in consequence of that event, but because, “ all flesh had corrupted *his* own ways upon the earth.” And even to this general corruption, Noah is an exception, for the Lord said to him “ Come thou and all thy house into the ark ; for thee have I seen righteous in this generation.” Here then, is an exception to that wide spread depravity ; which, with other instances mentioned in holy writ, as, Enoch, Elijah, &c. is a convincing proof, that moral depravity is no essential ingredient in the nature of man.

The man who has carefully attended to the workings of human nature, will undoubtedly have observed as great a diversity in the character of individuals, as in the features by which they are distinguished from each other. In large societies there is greater scope for the exercise, both of the virtuous and vicious propensities, and example becomes, if we may be allowed the expression, more contagious. Vice, however, being not only pernicious in its tendency, but quick in its effects, strikes and alarms us, and is hurried with the rapidity of our steam-impelled machines, while virtue, from its placid nature, like our aliments produces habitual health by imperceptible operations, and from the even tenor of its course—unless of an extraordinary and romantic kind—scarcely elicits an encomium. These

are undeniable facts which could have no existence if man was wholly indisposed and made opposite to all good. Experience proves that there is more virtue than vice in the world, otherwise society could not exist; and that the nature of mankind is generally disposed to good, though, through bad example, and the influence of sinister motives and other causes, it is occasionally perverted.

Were the question merely concerning the general depravity of mankind, the dispute would be shortly settled. No person denies that wickedness and depravity very generally, if not universally prevail. Or, if the question to be decided was concerning the introduction of evil, Christians are generally, if not universally agreed in the account given by the sacred historian. But the matter in dispute is, whether all mankind originating from Adam and Eve, are dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of body and soul in consequence of their eating the forbidden fruit; and is this their sin conveyed from them to the whole race of mankind by natural generation? Are all mankind "deprived of communion with God, under his curse, bond slaves of satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and the most grievous torments in soul and body in hell-fire for ever," in consequence of Adam's eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

Concerning the first question we have no hesitation in saying that it is a matter wholly to be settled as all philosophical questions should be settled, by observation and experience. The Almighty has not been pleased to give any special revelation concerning the generation of the soul, but of the body only; and that only so far as relates to the capability with which he has endowed mankind, of propagating his species, in common with all other animals. If we attempt to reason upon this subtle question, we might naturally conclude, that if vices can be propagated by natural generation, the children of atrocious criminals and their descendants would be addicted to the same vices as their progenitors. But experience has decided against this deduction of reason, and has abundantly proved that in general, children do not possess, or practise the same qualities of mind, or the same vices or virtues as their parents.

They are, in this respect, as different as in their features, and follow no general rule. As well might it be asserted, that a man could communicate his learning or profession by natural generation, as his virtues or vices. But it is said that Adam was a federal head, and stood for all his posterity. This requires proof; it has no foundation in scripture, but is a part and parcel of the same ingenious fiction. Indeed the scriptures are unequivocally decisive against it; for they assert that "the son shall not die for the iniquity of his father, Ezekiel, 18. 17.

The simple act of eating the forbidden fruit, would, in itself, have been a matter of indifference, only on account of the divine prohibition. The disposition of mind however, to commit the act, must have existed previous to the act itself. Guilt could not be imputed to the first impulse,—for, to resist temptation has always been esteemed a virtue—but must have commenced with the determination to commit the act. Adam, therefore, must have been as guilty in the sight of God, before eating the fruit, as after he had committed the deed, which was only a consummation of what he had before predetermined. Hence we may infer that the nature of our first parents was similar to that of their offspring; ready to yield to irregular desires, and equally subject to be overcome by temptation, and that their dispositions were perverted before the actual commission of the deed to which the fall is invariably ascribed. Is then, this universal hereditary depravity to be ascribed to this first yielding to temptation? And did the indulgence of that single propensity produce an entire change in the physical laws of his constitution, so that Adam and his posterity were necessitated to procreate a race, of a different nature and character from that in which he was created by the Almighty? Or, are we to suppose that a particular *virus* was contained in the desire, or in the fruit, of sufficient potency to contaminate the whole race of mankind, and to prevent their dispositions in so many contradictory ways, so that no virtuous propensity should be transmitted to check the contagion. It is admitted by the advocates of this doctrine that Adam and Eve repented of their sin, received the promise of the messiah, by faith in whom they obtained pardon. Why, it may be asked, was not this

penitent disposition propagated to their posterity? or, were they capable of imparting to them only their evil propensities without any mixture of the good? These questions cannot be answered without ascribing it to some original law, or arbitrary appointment of God, by which our first parents, and through them the whole human race have been rendered prone to every evil, without one redeeming quality to counteract the evil. Were we to ascribe the influence of the crime to the act itself, we could not discover any connection between the supposed cause and its dire effects, nor any natural or physical tendency to implant those seeds of universal depravity ascribed to this original transgression.—It may then, we think, safely be asserted that physical causes are wholly inadequate to produce the effects ascribed to the eating of the fruit of the tree of prohibition.

That the doctrine of hereditary depravity should be entertained by those who are advocates for the spirituality of the soul, is rather singular. The materialist, indeed, might be permitted to affix a literal signification to the terms corruption of human nature, contagion of sin, &c. and illustrate his position from the fermentative quality and expansive power of leaven, a small quantity of which will influence a large mass. But an advocate for the spirituality of the soul should be cautious in asserting that a momentary desire excited by a particular temptation, can infect kindred minds, while in a state of unconsciousness; and that this disposition can be diffused to infinity through successive generations.

The advocates for the spirituality of the human mind are not agreed concerning the time when the immortal principle is united with the corporeal. Some suppose that the corporeal frame alone is capable of propagation, and that at a certain period of vitality, the immortal spirit is infused by the deity into the animal system by some immutable law of his appointment. Others maintain that the spiritual nature is cotemporary with the corporeal, and that the germ of existence in its earliest state, contains the two principles of animal and spiritual life.

According to the first hypothesis (which the scriptures seem to favour, Eccles. xii. 7.) the doctrine of he-

reditary depravity is an impossibility. The spiritual part of man not being descended from Adam, could not partake of his pollution; but, coming from the deity himself, must necessarily be as pure as that of Adam, when he came from the hands of his creator. It can, therefore, have no relation to him, except that of dwelling in a tabernacle, which in the course of ordinary generation he had provided: and though its temporary abode may be so impure as to defile the soul that enters it, yet the soul itself cannot be charged with *hereditary* guilt, however it may be pitied for being constrained to occupy so impure a dwelling.

The other hypothesis, which supposes the co-existence of our corporeal and spiritual natures, is attended with difficulties no less insuperable than those of the former. The circumstances of being born into this world is merely incidental. As the soul existed co-eval with the corporeal germ, it was a responsible sinner, and heir of eternal misery, long before its very fetus could be formed, and must remain in the same wretched predicament, should it never have possessed a fetus, or should this never have arrived at its perfection of growth. Thus immense myriads of miserable embryos, that never saw the light of the sun, will as infallibly be plunged into the flames of hell, as the most abandoned of our species. And every germ that possesses a physical possibility of existing in this world, shall without doubt perish in the next, if the doctrine of Calvinism, and the Westminster catechism be true.

The doctrine of hereditary depravity destroys all necessity for any subsequent temptations of Satan since the fall; his whole business must have been completed by the success of his first enterprize. It also implicates the Saviour of sinners in the guilt of Adam's sin, as he was descended from Adam in the female line, and renders him equally with those he came to save, "liable to the wrath of God and the pains of hell for ever."

We have already trespassed too far upon the pages of the present number, and shall for the present dismiss the second question, concerning loss of communion with God, and punishment in this world and the next in consequence of Adam's first sin, by observing that it is unauthorized and opposed to the revealed word of God, and at variance with his attributes of goodness, mercy,

and justice. We shall probably resume the subject in a future number. In the mean time those who would wish to see the doctrine of hereditary depravity treated in a full, clear and masterly manner, would do well to consult "Letters to William Wilberforce. Esq. M. P. by a Layman," to which work the above brief sketch is indebted for some of its observations. W. X.

ON CONDEMNING THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH US IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." *Matt. vii. 1, 2.*

We are extremely apt to think, that the evidence which is sufficient to convince ourselves on any subject, should also satisfy others, as well as to wish that it were so; and we cannot help thinking it strange that *they* should entirely overlook, or value lightly, proofs which to *us* seem incontrovertible. This feeling is so deeply fixed in the human heart, that we may perceive its influence on a great variety of occasions in life; but on no subject does it operate with such a powerful effect as on that of religion. On this all-engrossing topic, some are willing to allow others the same privilege which they use and claim for themselves, and permit their neighbours to have a mind of their own; but many will not grant this equitable immunity. All, however, who take an interest in such matters, feel the same wish, less or more. The grand difference between the parties is, that with the one, it is kept in subjection to other considerations of a more important nature, while with the other, every thing is made to yield before it. It is a principal motive with many—I believe I might say with all—who engage in religious controversy; for next to the conviction that our own views are correct, is the desire that they should be extensively embraced. In the present state of the world it does not seem that the all-wise Creator designed that people should all think alike; yet a wish which is so universal was certainly implanted in our breasts for laudable purposes, and it is

only when indulged in to an improper extent, that it becomes criminal. Were it always regulated in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, it would undoubtedly be beneficial, by tending to promote inquiry and freedom of thought, "as iron sharpeneth iron;" but whenever this is not the case—whenever any undue means, such as fear, force, fraud, &c. are used to inculcate particular opinions, it must necessarily lead to evil; and how often this has been done, it is needless to inform any one who is in the least conversant with ecclesiastical history.

The human mind is so constituted that it must undergo a certain process before it is enabled to decide on any subject. In infancy its latent powers are wrapped up in unconsciousness and imbecility, as the bloom and fragrance of the embryo flower remain enveloped in its folds until brought to maturity by the influence of the sun, the air, and the juices of the earth. What these are to the insensate bud is education to the mind of man. By education I mean, in this instance, every thing we learn of every kind. On coming into the world, we are neither aware of our own being, nor of the existence of any thing around us, animate or inanimate. As the mind gains strength, we learn the difference between one object and another, and become able to distinguish by means of the eye, between a man and a beast,—between a beast and a bird,—between a bird and a fish,—between a fish and a stone,—between a stone and a tree.* We know none of these things intuitively—we have all this knowledge to learn. Neither is the eye the seat of it, but merely the organ by which it is conveyed to the mind, and a certain operation must take place between the period when the object is presented to the eye, and the time when the mind comes to the conclusion at which it naturally arrives, though the process is so quick that we cannot perceive it. When, however, it arrives at this conclusion, it does so involuntarily—it is utterly impossible for it to decide other-

* This view might be greatly extended. Many things might be added to the above, such as the difference between day and night, summer and winter, cold and heat, silence and noise, bitter and sweet, &c.; but I have confined myself to a single branch of the subject for the sake of simplicity, and as being sufficient for my present purpose.

wise than it does. In matters of this kind, no man blames another for thinking as he does, because on such subjects all are agreed. And why should there be an exception in matters of religion? Why should man deny his brother the same privilege in judging of his spiritual concerns, which he universally grants him in deciding respecting material objects? Had God, in his infinite wisdom, thought fit, he could easily have formed our minds in such a manner, that we would all think as exactly alike in religion as on the other subjects I have mentioned. There can be no doubt but our minds were made as they now are for the wisest purposes, and it is only the perversity of man that turns what was meant for a blessing into a curse. On the subject of religion also, whatever knowledge we possess must have been acquired through the medium of the senses. Words are useful only as they convey ideas; the Bible itself would be of no use to us were it not for the eye; neither could we derive any benefit from oral instruction, were it not conveyed to the mind by the ear. I readily admit that a man may have some idea of a great First Cause, though he knows nothing of revelation; but this does not destroy the parallel, for we would be able to distinguish between one object and another, and to know something of their qualities, though we had never been taught the names of one of them. Again, we are not able to decide on the subject of religion, more than on the others, all at once, unless we take our opinions at second hand, and allow others to think for us. When a man becomes convinced, from sincere inquiry, calm deliberation, and cool reflection, on any point in religion, that conviction is truth to him; and I cannot help thinking it is as unfair and unjust to dogmatically tell that man he is in error, as it would be to assure him he is wrong in deciding that a man is not a horse, that an eagle is not a whale, or that a piece of earth is neither a stone nor a tree.* In both cases the mind requires to be exercised, and a certain operation must be performed before it becomes thoroughly con-

* "It is for want of reflection that we are apt to think that our senses show us nothing but material things. Every act of sensation, when duly considered, gives us an equal view of both parts of nature, the corporeal, and spiritual."—*Locke on the Understanding. Book ii. Chap. 23, p. 15.*

vinced in either. No man has any right to say to another, that his views of religion are erroneous, unless he be able to prove that he has not used the means which were in his power for ascertaining the truth. If he has not done this, then he is blameable—otherwise he is not, let his opinions be what they may. I do not mean to institute any comparison, as to their importance, between the two different kinds of knowledge. My intention is, simply to show, that as the same faculties must be employed in both cases, less or more, and as in the one they are admitted to be faithful guides, so we have no reason to think, nor has any man a right to say, they will deceive us in the other, when properly used.

The command contained in the passage of scripture prefixed to this paper, is so positive, and the reason given for its observance so plain, and so very easily applied, that one would think it almost impossible for any person who had ever read it, to overlook or disregard it. One would think this penalty attached to the act, might be sufficient to cure people of the itch for dealing in condemnation; yet the self-styled orthodox set it at defiance every day, and “judge” those who differ from them without scruple or hesitation. Let them, however, reflect on the dreadful situation in which they place themselves, by daring to condemn those who are as virtuous men, and as good members of society as themselves; and as they hope for mercy at the last awful day, let them pause, ere, in the hardness of their hearts, they presume to deny that mercy to others. Let them think how they would like to have the same sentence passed upon themselves, which they relentlessly pronounce against their brethren, and be more careful to avoid such a practice in future.

Unitarians have, ere now, been told, because they will not, and dare not, like their opponents, arrogantly assume the attribute of omniscience, and declare positively what is truth and what is error, that they cannot be so fully convinced of the correctness of their own sentiments, as those who fulminate their anathemas against all who disagree with them; but certainly the disposition to condemn others, could add nothing to a man’s own security, if he would ever allow himself to reflect how liable all are to err, and how dangerous it is to “judge” others.

Human life has often been compared to a journey. My brother and I set out from a certain point, wishing to arrive at another. May we not take different roads, each thinking his own the best, without condemning the choice of the other, and both gain the place of our destination? Surely both might be conscious that it would only exhaust our strength, and make us less able to sustain the difficulties we must encounter in executing our task, did each vainly endeavour to drag the other along with him against his inclination. There we must render an account of our conduct on the way—but as I firmly believe—not the particular road we have travelled.

It has been alleged as a reason why Roman Catholics so greatly outnumber Protestants, that both parties admit that there is salvation in the Church of Rome, while Protestants have only the testimony of those of their own persuasion in their favour; and that weak-minded men naturally think themselves safest in that communion which has most witnesses in its behalf, without considering whether it agrees best with scripture and reason. The same reasoning will apply, as to numbers, to the different parties of Presbyterians now at issue in this country. The orthodox are, as far as they possess the power, playing the same game towards the Unitarians, which the Roman Catholics, several centuries ago, did towards all who opposed them, and have adopted one of their very worst tenets—exclusive salvation. This system of denouncing their opponents has long prevailed less or more, among different sects, and it must be owned that those who practise it, have generally the greatest number of followers; yet I would ask no better proof than their having recourse to it, that those who act upon it are themselves aware of the weakness of their cause. Whoever abandons the fair and broad field of reason and argument, and attempts (for luckily no man can do more) to “deal damnation round the land” on all who think differently from himself, tacitly acknowledges that his cause is unable to stand upon its own merits. The man who overheard a dispute between two others, with whose language he was wholly unacquainted, was able to decide which of them was worsted in the argument, by observing that one of them lost his temper. The application is easy.

The system is built upon and receives its support from, the weakest part of the human mind. It is addressed to, and calculated to work upon the fears and prejudices of the ignorant, the timid and the unreflecting; and though we hear much of the age of improvement, of the march of intellect, of the schoolmaster being abroad,—and with truth, too, comparatively speaking,—still it does not require any very deep study of mankind to know, that by far the greater number come under one or other of the above denominations. Those who act upon it are doubtless aware of its effects, else they would not have recourse to it. I look upon a dam-natory clause as one of the very worst auxiliaries which can accompany any creed. Those who use such a clause, seem to me to be making a desperate attempt to make up in the number what they are conscious is wanting in the intelligence of their followers. The orthodox are extremely apt to plume themselves on their superior numbers, and to represent unitarians as contemptible, because they cannot count man for man with them, just as if arithmetic had any influence on the correctness of religious opinions—as if truth were to be regulated by the Rule of Three. Whenever men feel inclined to boast of their numbers, I would recommend to their attention the following passage from the sermon on the Mount :—“ Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” “ But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matt. vii. 13, 14.

Were Unitarians disposed to act upon the exclusive system, perhaps they might thereby gain a few nominal adherents, but of what value would they be when they had them? Better to possess one follower from conscientious conviction than a thousand through fear. But they do not think that justice warrants the use of such means; neither do they believe that *their* cause requires it. If the orthodox do not wish to have it thought that they deliberately practise upon the people's fears, rather than appeal to their judgment, let them act upon the principles of free trade, and prove their sincerity by abandoning this part of their creed; and they will thereby free themselves from the well-grounded imputation of being afraid to meet their opponents

on fair terms. According, however, as the light of knowledge encreases,—and that it is encreasing rapidly, there can be no doubt, though much yet remains to be accomplished—the system of men judging their brethren, loses its force. As the mind becomes expanded by education, and strengthened by reflection, it is enabled to treat such narrow views with the contempt which they justly merit. The man who leads a virtuous life, and has the courage to think for himself—

“He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day,”

despising the impotent denunciations of his erring fellow-mortals.

AN ELDER'S SON.

GOD TEMPTETH NOT MAN.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”

APOSTLE JAMES.

THERE is nothing connected with religion more important, than to acquire just notions of the Supreme Being. If we entertain unworthy opinions concerning him whom we profess to worship, our worship itself must be strongly tainted with pollution, and of course, it cannot be acceptable to him, to whom it is addressed; and not only will our devotional exercises be unbecoming and unworthy, but the whole tenor of our actions will manifest the same impurity and corruption.

In the most enlightened nations of the heathen world, the Gods whom they worshipped, were represented as subject to human infirmities, and as indulging in all the sensuality which we consider as degrading to human nature; and the consequence was, that their worshippers, even the most virtuous, and learned, and amiable among them, sunk into vices, and gloried in actions of very great depravity.

When the Jews departed from the service of the living God, and were seduced by the example of the idolatrous people around them, into the worship of Moloch, whom they believed to be obdurate, and delighting in cruelty; they became so unfeeling themselves,

and so devoid of every tender and parental affection, as to make their own children pass through fire, and as some writers affirm, they even sacrificed them, in honour of this idol.

In later times also, the most absurd and monstrous superstitions have been displayed by professing christians, and believed in with the greatest degree of enthusiasm, arising entirely from a misconception of the nature and attributes of God; and even at the present day, and among good, and well meaning men, many opinions are entertained respecting the most high, which we might suppose none who maturely reflected on the subject, could possibly entertain.

It cannot be denied that temptations often assail us, and it is equally true, that we often submit to their influence; but we are not to excuse ourselves by saying, that we are "tempted of God." We are taught to believe in the sacred records of our holy religion, that the most high "delighteth not in the death of sinners," and that "men shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body." Now if this is the case, it would certainly be setting the Almighty in a very appalling point of view, to suppose, that he *tempted* man to the commission of crimes, for the very purpose of punishing him. It is true, we are all disposed to assume as favourable an aspect as we possibly can, and to impress our neighbours with good opinions of our principles and conduct; when therefore we yield to any improper impulse, or give way to any impure desire, we are willing to roll the blame off ourselves, and place it to the account of human nature. We are willing to remove, or to prevent bad impressions which have gone, or may go forth against us, as well as to appease our own consciences, and to persuade ourselves into an opinion, that we are not so culpable as others pronounce us, or as we ourselves have thought. This however is only self-deception, and though it may give a false and momentary security to those who never examine their own hearts, or consider the nature of their own actions, yet a short period of reflection would teach us, that our confidence in such cases, is only the confidence of apathy, and our security the blindness of death.

Who will take upon him to say, that he was led to commit murder, or theft; that he has been seduced to

treachery and deceit; that he has been guilty of faithless vows, and broken promises; that he hath defrauded the unsuspecting; betrayed the innocent; oppressed the poor; trampled on the humble, or sent the hoary head in sorrow to the grave, by the temptation of God, or through the instigation of the Almighty? Who will presume to lay his own personal and individual sins to the charge of Omnipotence, and will attempt to vindicate his conduct, or to palliate his offences by saying, that he was *compelled* or *seduced* by his maker, or that a being worthy of praise and worship could possibly co-operate with folly, wilfully pervert the minds of his rational offspring, and exert the boundless attributes of his nature, in enticing them to destruction? The idea when presented in this form, is so horrible, so disgusting, so repugnant to every notion that we can form of God, that the human mind revolts from the thought, and feels that the imputation is the very worst species of blasphemy. But though perhaps no man will have the effrontery to assert, in plain direct terms, that he is tempted to the commission of sin by the power and influence of God; yet many maintain doctrines, which certainly lead to this belief, and which are entertained by some without reflection, and probably professed by others, to excuse them in their own eyes, for the commission of crimes, which they might have avoided.

The first of those doctrines which I shall mention, is the generally received opinion of what is called original sin. In alluding to the transgression of Adam, and the consequences of it to his posterity, Calvinists maintain, "that the whole human race, by that single offence, are *born at enmity with God—are utterly indisposed to every thing that is good—are wholly inclined to all evil—are by nature children of wrath—bound slaves to Satan under the curse of God in this world, and born to most grievous torments in soul and body, in hell fire for ever.**"

Now the only penalty which the holy and eternal maker of man attached to his disobedience is in these words, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" and by no means does he say, or insinuate, that the whole posterity of Adam would be involved in the guilt of his sin; and come into the world loaded with the guilt of

* See Westminster Confession, and Assembly's Catechism.

his transgression; and made thereby altogether incapable of good; and altogether prone to that which is evil—so far from it, that after the offence was committed, and when our first parents were writhing under the scorpion stings of a guilty conscience, we find the most high soothing their sorrows by assuring them, “that one sprung from the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head;” and we also find that kind and benevolent being in whom this promise was fulfilled, saying, “suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” It is however a soothing, though altogether a vain and unfounded consolation, to the depraved, the impious, the scoffer of religion and religion’s laws, to think, if he think at all, that he was created, and sent forth from the hands of his maker, incapable of thinking a good thought; speaking a good word; or doing a good action; it is throwing the iniquity off his own head; it is an apology for every crime he commits; for why should he attempt to do that which it is impossible for him to perform? or why should he endeavour to refrain from wickedness, when he is *created* with every bad propensity, with every sinful passion, with every vile affection, and without any one good principle or feeling, enabling, or even prompting him to resist temptation. “For this reason it is,” says a powerful writer, “that many like to hear their vices imputed to *original* depravity, and not to their own wilful perverseness, because then they do not feel themselves responsible; they like to hear their want of holiness spoken of as the result of natural incapacity, rather than of any fault or neglect of their own, because they will feel no remorse for what they cannot avoid. They like especially to be told that they can do nothing to procure, or even to prepare themselves for salvation, as this furnishes them with a sufficient excuse for not even attempting it. Abuse a man’s nature, and you merely shift the blame of his vices upon the author of his nature—tell a man that he inherits corruption and depravity from Adam, and you merely furnish to his hands the very thing he wants; an apology for being corrupt and depraved.” In short, to those who are devoted to any of those pursuits which war against the laws of heaven, and against the interest of their own souls, there can be nothing more plea-

sing than the belief, that they are what they were made; that they cannot make themselves better, that they cannot curb one licentious passion, nor control one inordinate desire, and that therefore they may continue to indulge in every gratification, and submit without resistance to the dominion of sin, until it shall please God by the irresistible workings of his free grace to compel them to righteousness. I am far from believing indeed, that human nature is perfect, or that it can be perfect in this world; and I am also far from believing that any man can merit eternal happiness by the purity of his own heart, and the undeviating rectitude of his own conduct; but I am equally far from believing, that a child comes into the world, liable to the eternal wrath and curse of God on account of Adam's disobedience; or in the words of a Calvinistic divine, "that the hearts of children are the habitation of devils; that God is angry with them every day, that his bow is bent, and the arrows of his wrath are pointed against them, that angels would gladly sheath their flaming swords in their bowels; that they are cursed in their gifts, in their privileges, in their labours, in their food, in their raiment, in their basket, and in their store; that hell from beneath is moved to meet them at their coming, and damned angels in cruel derision stand ready to ask 'art thou also become like one of us?'"* Is there a father in any Christian land who believes this of his child; and when he presents him for baptism, can he look in his innocent face, and really think that he is a child of wrath, under the curse of God, and heir only of hell's fire? Is there a mother in the wide circle of the world, who, when she presses her smiling infant to her bosom, thinks for a moment, that she folds in her arms a child, born only to the curse of God; that she is the mother of a being, who comes into life with no better promise than that it is an heir of eternal perdition? I appeal to every parent who may read this. I appeal to every father and mother, if they believe that their young, and incapable babe can possibly be born under the wrath and curse of the Almighty? and I would also ask, if they believe in this doctrine, how they can reconcile it to their consciences to be the means

* Brown, of Haddington.

of bringing rational creatures into the world, under such horrible and heart-rending conditions?

But another doctrine which still more directly throws the blame of all our wickedness on the Almighty, is the doctrine of *predestination*. It is asserted by Calvinists, that "God Almighty for his own glory, hath foreordained whatever comes to pass."

Now certainly, there cannot be any doctrine more soothing to the conscience of a determined profligate than this. Every thing he does is owing to the *decree* of God, his most atrocious deeds of villainy, his dark hypocrisy, his treachery, his malice, his licentiousness, his thefts, his robberies, and his murders, were all foreordained in the eternal councils of heaven, and for them not he, of course, but (I speak it with horror,) his Creator, is to blame. According to this doctrine, the sin of Adam was in *obedience* to the *decree* of his maker. According to this doctrine Judas was *made* a son of perdition, and *preordained* to betray the Lord of life. According to this doctrine, those who crucified Jesus Christ did it under the *compulsion* of Jehovah. According to this doctrine, the very devil himself, waged war in heaven, and rebelled against his eternal king, by that same king's *decree*; and according to this doctrine, men are *driven* into scenes of the blackest guilt by the hand of Omnipotence, and then plunged into eternal torments for the commission of crimes which they could not possibly avoid.

Who that really believes in this doctrine will attempt to resist evil—or imagine that there is any necessity for pious exertion, or that he is called on to cleanse his hands and purify his heart, or to discharge any duty whatever, either to God or to man? In fact, if he can possibly think, that his temporal and eternal state are fixed by an absolute and eternal law, he must also think that he might as well raise his feeble arm against the power of omnipotence and hope to succeed, as attempt to do any one thing but what he actually does, whether that may be good or bad.

But, my brethren, consider for a moment the manner in which such a doctrine involves the dispensations of providence. If the fate of man is appointed by the absolute decree of God, this decree of course must be immutable, and if immutable, where was the necessity for

our Saviour's coming into the world ; of his preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins ; of promising grace and pardon ; of encountering calumny and persecution, and contumely, and reproach, and death ? Where was the necessity of his apostles undergoing the same, in propagating his doctrines ? and where is the necessity of exhorting you to think of those things that pertain to your peace ?

In fact this doctrine takes away all responsibility from man—represents the sovereign ruler of the universe as fickle, unjust and capricious ; issuing commands to his people which he has made it impossible for them to obey ; promising rewards which he has foreordained they shall never obtain ; creating them to sin, and then hurling them to eternal destruction, if they transgress ; not only *tempting* them to disobedience, but *forcing* them by his own irresistible power into that line of conduct, which will plunge them into the torments of that place where “ the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

The very circumstance of the most high having sent his son to redeem the world, is one of the most incontestible proofs that man is not naturally averse to every thing good, and that his conduct is the result of his free will. If this was not the case, and if God were disposed to tempt man to sin, is it likely that he would have deputed a pure and incorruptible being to point out unto us its dangerous consequences ; to assure us of the mercy of God ; to confirm our wavering faith ; to open up to us the brightest prospects of glory, and to die on the cross to convince us that the promises of the most high respecting us shall be fulfilled : for he is not man ‘ that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. No, his thoughts have ever been towards us thoughts of peace and not of evil.’ Safely therefore may we rely on his mercy ; freely may we depend on his compassionate declarations ; without fear and without dread may we repose that confidence in him to which he invites us, and upheld and supported by the encouragements of his grace, we shall be enabled to overcome the temptations, which not he, but a wicked world, depraved and sinful men, and our own unrestrained and evil passions cast in our way.

Nor should you let the thought once enter into your minds, that you cannot do any thing pleasing in the sight of God ; that you are so corrupted and vile by nature, that your best efforts are an abomination unto him—if you are led to really entertain such opinions, you will sink into despondency, and so far from living a life of active duty, you will persuade yourselves into a belief, that exertion is altogether useless, and that it is in vain for you to exercise your faculties and powers in the great work of your own salvation.

I may grant you that we are by nature weak and imperfect, that we are liable to be led away from the paths of piety and holiness, but I do not believe that we came into the world loaded with guilt, under the wrath and curse of God, and incapable ever after of doing any thing acceptable in his sight. Our own convictions, as well as the whole tenor of scripture, sufficiently testify against such opinions, and when the day of retribution arrives, they will afford no palliation nor excuse for our transgressions.

We are placed in situations where we must meet with many trials of our principles and of our virtue, but if we exert resolution and firmness, those trials will not overcome us. We have the power of reason to combat the temptations of vice, and we have the light and strength of revelation to fix our faith, and confirm our piety ; we have the example of Jesus Christ to inspire us with the love of holiness, and we have also the promised aid of divine grace to purge our affections, and purify our souls. With such sources of help and support, if we conscientiously avail ourselves of them, we will be enabled to discharge our duties, and though we cannot be free from those failings and infirmities which are attached to human nature, yet we may so perform our parts here, that we may look forward with humble hope, to the possession of happiness hereafter, through the mediation of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

S. T.

Intelligence.

THE REV. MR. WATSON'S REPLY TO DR. COOKE'S AUTHENTICATED SPEECH, IN THE CASE OF CLOUGH, CO. DOWN.

WE did not intend to have occupied so much of our present number with the Clough business, but Dr. Cooke's budget of misstatements, quibbles and inconsistencies, having gone the round of the newspapers; their having been published in a pamphlet with *notes*, and then republished in *The Orthodox Presbyterian*, we think it better to give the whole of Mr. Watson's reply, as it appeared in *The Whig* of July the 21st; correcting a slight mistake into which Mr. Watson has fallen. The two members of the Antrim Presbytery did go into the pulpit before the usual time, but did not commence public worship until the regular hour. Mr. Johnson, however, had given no reason to Mr. Allen, to understand that he would not go to the Meeting-house, and to the pulpit, when he thought proper. Connected in some measure with this affair, we insert the copy of a letter, sent through the post office to Dr. Cooke; but which he has not condescended to notice.

“Belfast, July 19th.

“Sir,—The Editors of the ‘Bible Christian’ find the following words, in a report of a speech, made by you at the last meeting of the Synod of Ulster, on the business of the Congregation of Clough. ‘Now it has been asserted in a libellous publication, in which the name of Christian is assumed, that it may be desecrated, that we broke a solemn compact.’ The public prints have alleged that the ‘Bible Christian’ is the publication, whose report you state to be false. You are at perfect liberty to call it libellous if it suit your taste; but the Editors wish to know, whether you mean by these words to contradict the statement made in the number for June last, or any other statement in the ‘Bible Christian,’ with respect to the Clough Congregation. If you do, they challenge you to an investigation of the matter, and pledge themselves to prove the correctness of *their* statement, and that *yours*, so far as it differs from theirs, is at *variance with the truth*. If you think proper to answer this, be pleased to direct to No. 33, High-street.

EDITORS OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.”

“Rev. Dr. Cooke, Belfast.

Such matters as these are beneath the Rev. Doctor's notice, unless when “forced by kind friends on his attention;” and his *kind* friends very *kindly* accommodate their information to his convenience.

We proceed now to lay before our readers Mr. Watson's reply; and, notwithstanding, the ‘great sensation’ excited in the august assembly, by the Doctor's ranting about Claverhouse, Lord Kilwarden, pikes, bayonets and pistol bullets; and his howling over injured church discipline, and poor persecuted orthodoxy. ‘Mark how a plain tale will put him down.’

CLOUGH CONGREGATION—DR. COOKE'S SPEECH CONTRADICTED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN WHIG.

SIR,—It becomes my duty, as Minister of the original branch of Clough Congregation, to give a public contradiction to the misstatements contained in Dr. Cooke's speech, at last Synod, concerning the affairs of the Presbyterians of this place. I feel pained at embarking in newspaper discussion. I am unwilling to waste my time in contradicting such an authority as Dr. Cooke; but I cannot permit *even his* statements to be circulated among those unacquainted with the facts, without coming forward to correct his misrepresentations, and publish the truth. I may observe, in passing, that he has, throughout his whole oration, assumed and asserted, that Mr. Dill is entitled to the possession of the Meeting-house. This question is now before the proper tribunal for decision; and I shall notice it no farther than to observe, that the Rev. Dr. has proved considerably mistaken in his *first* legal attempt, a fortnight since, and may, perhaps, find himself equally disappointed when he makes his *last*. I must also observe, that as his whole speech, from its commencement to its close, does not contain one sentence unmixed with untruth; and as it would be impossible, within the limits of this letter, and, indeed, disgusting, if possible, to expose all those aberrations, I shall confine myself to noticing the most important. My observations are based upon *The News-Letter* report, which, if I may judge from the introductory paragraph of last Tuesday's paper, being published by 'special request,' comes with a character of authenticity, and is, therefore, perhaps, *somewhat less likely* to be hereafter denied by Dr. Cooke, as containing a true account of what he said,"

"1. Dr. Cooke has charged two Members of the Antrim Presbytery, Messrs. W. Bruce and Johnson, with violating an engagement made by one of them, with Mr. Allen, on a Saturday in August, 1829, 'that they should not pre-occupy the pulpit of Clough Meeting-house, on the following morning;' whereas, according to Dr. Cooke, they entered it "*two hours before the ordinary time for public worship*;" with want of courtesy in declining to leave the pulpit, in order to converse with Mr. Allen; and, to complete their sins, with refusing to allow that gentleman to read a certain notice from the pulpit, which they then filled. Mr. Allen, himself, at the request of Dr. Cooke, stated, that *an understanding*, such as I have mentioned, was entered into between him and Mr. Johnson; that, on entering the house next morning, he found the pulpit already occupied; and that the two Ministers refused either to leave the pulpit, or to admit him into it. Now, Sir, I have the authority of Mr. Johnson himself, for 'distinctly denying, that he gave Mr. Allen any pledge *directly or indirectly*, respecting the hour at which he should go to the Meeting-house;' and I have the authority of every member of the Session of Clough, for denying, that the Ministers entered the pulpit before the usual hour. They went to the Session-room, between eleven and twelve o'clock; and were conducted thence to the

pulpit, at the accustomed hour for the Clergyman to enter it. It is very true, that they declined to leave the pulpit afterwards, to enjoy the pleasure of Mr. Allen's conversation; and they would have done the same had Dr. Cooke himself been there. It is also true, that, when Mr. Allen ascended the pulpit stairs, they did not treat him so unkindly as his friends in the same place treated me, when they seized me by the neck, and their Minister pushed me away with violence, which caused me, in order to prevent my falling down the pulpit stairs, to extend my hands and seize either the aggressor or the hand-railing. It is true, that they spoke to Mr. Allen where he stood, and refused to admit him into that pulpit which was already filled by them, and which was no longer under the dominion of the Synod of Ulster. They understood, from his language, that he wished to address the people from the pulpit, in order to claim some title to it; and they, most properly, declined being accessory to such a measure. Mr. Allen I believe to be a respectable and proper individual; but he came there in opposition to the real wishes of the Congregation, the emissary of a faction created, nursed, and fostered by the machinations of Dr. Cooke alone; and, therefore, he was not admitted to a pulpit which was not his. Mr. Johnson, however, at his request, stated to the people the hour and place where he meant to preach; and in doing so, expressed his approbation of the conduct of Mr. Allen, the general tenor of which showed, that this gentleman knew and felt himself to be an intruder in the house.

"2. Dr. Cooke next proceeds to describe a proposal for arbitration made to the contending parties, on the Sunday when the Doctor himself was preaching in one corner of the Meeting-house yard, and I in another, the house being then actually occupied by neither party. He stated, as an introduction to his little story, that the Synodical party 'had regained their original possession of the house, in consequence of the Arians leaving the key behind them,' whereas, the fact is, that Mr. Donnan, an Elder of mine, had, from the first, and still has, the *original* and *proper* keys in his possession; but our opponents having remained in the house one Sunday after us, put on *new* locks, of which they have the keys; and for a few days, held a disputed occupation of the house with a regular *armed guard*, till they were in the end turned out once more. The Doctor having indulged in a variety of similar trivial observations, proceeds thus:—

"The persons mutually agreed to abstain from occupying the Meeting-house, until the opinion of the Counsel could be obtained, stating—whether the key (of the Meeting-house) could be deposited with a third party without weakening the alleged possession on the part of our friends: and if so, how it could be effected! An Attorney upon each side was forthwith nominated, and I attended, with some of the people of Clough, to give instructions for case in all due form. How many six-and-eight-pences the matter cost, I do not now remember; but I know the *Attorneys*, after conference, *agreed* that the question could not be proposed to Counsel, and so the matter ended." "I am told that in a libellous publication, which in the assumption desecrates the name of Christian, we have been accused of having *violated our engagement*, by entering *again into the Meeting-house*. 'Our Minister has twice attempted to take possession of the Meeting-house, but *each time he has done so under legal advice*—first, by the Attorney who knew the conditions of the agreement; and knew they had expired—then by Counsel, who considered the entry necessary to assert possession, after it had been, as he believed, illegally assumed by a bench of Magistrates, whose warrant to that effect was submitted to his inspection. Be it remembered, then, that the agreement I made to abstain from possession, was to continue till the opinion of Counsel could be obtained. Be it remembered, that *our opponents* determined not to ask this

opinion. The condition of the bargain being thus relinquished, the bargain itself was relinquished; and when we entered on possession, it was not until the agreement to refrain having thus terminated by mutual consent, each party was free from every previous engagement."

"Now, Sir, having quoted these words from Dr. Cooke's authorised statement, I will venture to assert, that a grosser tissue of falsehoods and quibbles never emanated from the lips of man. I shall contradict the reverend gentleman's assertions, by a document signed *with his own hand*, and written, if I mistake not, *by himself*. I do not stop to notice the contradictions in his statement, where he first tells us that 'the attorneys,' that is for both parties, 'after conference, agreed,' that it was unnecessary to consult Counsel. Then, that I and my friends 'determined not to ask' Counsel's opinion, and thus 'relinquished the bargain;' and in the next breath, that 'the agreement to refrain terminated *by mutual consent*.' Such contradictions might have been expected. The most cunning disseminator of untruth never fails to be caught in his own snares. The path of truth is direct, but that of falsehood is crooked and complicated, and apt to bewilder even the most experienced frequenter of its ways. It is necessary, in the first place, to state, that by an arrangement entered into, on the 21st August, 1829, between some leading men on each side, it was agreed 'that the keys should be handed over for safe-keeping, to the Rev. William Annesley, until some arrangement should be made; and that the persons then in the house, (the Synodical guard before alluded to, *among whom was a number of Orangemen and strangers unconnected with the Congregation*,) should immediately quit the House,' such agreement being to continue in force till Monday, the 31st instant, without prejudice to any right thereafter to be ascertained. Thus stood matters on the 23d August, the Meeting-house being closed against both parties, under this temporary arrangement, and both performing their respective services in the green, when the conference, so foully misrepresented by Dr. Cooke, took place between the opposing parties, in presence of two neighbouring Magistrates, Colonel Forde and Major Rainey. There, on the proposal of Dr. Cooke himself, and on his suggestion (not 'a mere bubble, or a weak device of the Arian party,' as he now says) the following agreement was made and signed."

"it is agreed to, that the opinion of Counsellor Holmes be taken, (the expense equally to be defrayed by the parties into which the congregation of Clough has been divided,) as to the manner in which all keys, belonging to the Meeting-house of Clough, may be deposited in the hands of some gentleman unconnected with the parties, so that peace may be preserved, and the parties may remain in all respects, as to legal rights, or alleged legal rights, as they do now stand, *until after an amicable adjustment, or legal determination*. The case to be submitted by Messrs. Craig and Wallace, of Downpatrick, in a document mutually agreed upon. The key of the yard-gate to remain in the hands of the sextoness, for the sole purpose of burials; and not to be claimed or appropriated by either of the parties. Signed on behalf of the parties, Clough, 23d August, 1829.

"Present, } M. FORDE,
 } W. H. RAINEY,

"JAMES MURLAND."
JOHN BLACKWOOD.
H. COOKE,
DAVID WATSON."

"Will Dr. Cooke deny this document, *signed with his own hand*? This is no loose newspaper report, which a man, playing a crooked part, may find it convenient sometimes to deny. It was signed be-

fore two magistrates, who rejoiced in thus ending the conflicts of the parties. Major Rainey offered two houses to the two parties, till the Meeting-house should be re-opened: but when was that to occur? 'Not,' says the agreement signed by Dr. Cooke, in August, 1829, 'till after an amicable adjustment, or legal determination.' 'So soon,' says Dr. Cooke, in June 1831, 'as my attorney, and the attorney of my opponents, agreed, on their own responsibility, that the subsisting arrangement was sufficient, without the expense of consulting counsel.' Sir, I am far from accusing Dr. Cooke of modesty, or of consistency; but, I ask him, does he not blush for being detected in a statement such as this?—Does he not feel, that the cause must suffer, when its advocate resorts to such shuffling, such disingenuousness? 'Our Minister has twice attempted to take possession of the Meeting-house, but each time he has done so *under legal advice*.' Can legal advice I ask, repeal the laws of honour or subvert the dictates of morality? Can legal advice justify treachery, or excuse an outrage upon common faith? If it can, I would fling legal advice to the winds of heaven, and do what an honest conscience bade me. I do declare, that I would rather this night lie down with the assurance that I should never rise from my bed again, that I should never more see the bright sun above me, or the green earth pouring out its gladness around me, than break the solemn pledge which I had sanctioned with my name, and then stand up before the wide world to excuse myself by '*legal advice*.' 'I know not,' says Dr. Cooke, 'how many six-and-eight-pences the matters cost; but I know the *attorneys*, after conference, *agreed*, that the question *could not be proposed* to counsel, and so the matter ended.' So then the Rev. Dr. *does* know, that the attorneys '*agreed*,' that there was nothing in the proposed arrangement which need be submitted to Counsel. He *does* know, then, that these gentlemen, 'on conference,' pronounced the arrangement sufficient to preserve the public peace, and effectuate the purposes proposed, without submitting a ridiculous and immaterial question to counsel. He *does* know, that, while both parties kept out of the house, it mattered not with whom the keys were deposited, until the disputed rights should be arranged, 'by amicable adjustment or legal determination.' Oh, says he, the agreement to abstain from possession was to continue 'until the opinion of counsel could be obtained; and then, '*be it remembered*, that our opponents determined not to ask this opinion.' There are *many things*, Sir, in this transaction, which Presbyterian Ulster will long remember.

"3. Dr. Cooke says, that afterwards, upon 'the Arian party serving notices of ejection,' Mr. Dill, by advice of his attorney, entered the Meeting-house, for the purpose of worship, and was assaulted by me, rushing up to the pulpit, and seizing him by the breast. 'Legal advice' again! Mr. Dill entered in violation of the solemn compact signed by Dr. Cooke: that compact was to remain in force till 'after an amicable adjustment or legal determination; and yet Mr. Dill entered, and then, *and not till then*, did I go to the house to assert my rights, and to oppose the faithless aggressor. As to the assault, which the wily language of the Doc-

tor attempts to throw upon me, and thereby to mislead the public, I shall only say, that a bench of magistrates, consisting of Colonel Forde, C. Trotter, esq. the Rev. Messrs. Annesley and Johnston, ruled, after two days deliberation, that Mr. Dill had *no more* ground (and I say *less*) to charge me with an assault, than I had to charge him. Mr. Dill's own oath frees me from an assault upon him; and yet Dr. Cooke has the unblushing effrontery to assert, in a religious assembly of his fathers and brethren, and before a public audience, that I entered the house, and committed an act of violence upon one of their body! I do confess, that I pity even Dr. Cooke. As to the magistrates afterwards closing the doors against us both, I have been told that our lawyers believe them to have therein exceeded their powers. I suffered by it more than Mr. Dill.—My friends had been *in sole* possession after the division of the congregation: Mr. Dill never yet preached from that pulpit; yet we submitted: I knew that the measure was adopted by the magistrates to preserve the peace of the country, after it had been sworn before them by two deponents unconnected with me or my congregation, that the entrance of either party would certainly lead to a riot, and perhaps to bloodshed; and though my opponents may not shudder at such a prospect, I do. I knew, moreover, that the order of the magistrates only gave another sanction to that agreement to which our names were already pledged; and from that pledge we would have scorned to seek an escape by either falsehood or subterfuge. The order was to keep out of that house which was justly ours. to delay for a little the possession of our own:—but we had signed an agreement to the same effect; good faith demanded obedience, and *we* at least obeyed. Our opponents may justify *their* attempt to gain possession, if they can.

“4. I hasten to that portion of the Doctor's speech which produced considerable sensation, I am told, in the Synod, at Coleraine, and which, I will venture to assert, is almost without a parallel in the annals of distortion and misrepresentation.—I mean the part where he describes me, assisted by a Catholic mob, opposing another attempt of Mr. Dill to take possession; and the subsequent dispersion of both parties by Mr. Trotter, a neighbouring magistrate. I request that the reader will turn to *The News-Letter* of last Tuesday, before he peruses the following simple statement of the truth. There will be but one feeling of amazement even among those who know the Rev. Doctor best.

“In the last week of April, 1831, it became known that Mr. Dill, (acting of course, under ‘legal advice,’ meant to attempt a second breach of his agreement and his honour, and, at whatever risk to the peace of the parish and the lives of the people, to again seek that possession of the meeting-house, which he had never yet been able to obtain; but which there was, as he, perhaps thought, nothing except a respect for good faith to prevent him from then obtaining. Our legal advisers were then all in Dublin. We wrote thither for directions how to act in the emergency. We entreated that, if it could be without an abandonment of our just rights, we should not be directed to risk any collision with the outrageous mob to whose fury we knew that we should be exposed. We stated our

unwillingness to forfeit the character which even our opponents could not, in their hearts, deny us to have gained—of acting peaceably and with dignity, while we asserted our rights with unflinching firmness. The answer sent us was concise. We were told not to permit Mr. Dill to take possession. We were told to prevent him under any circumstances from preaching in the house. We were to offer no violence to any man, to use no force, till, by force, we should be opposed. And as we wished only to assert our rights, and were not the persons seeking to break the solemn agreement between the parties, we were desired to inform any officers who should come, in case of a conflict, that we were there only to assert those rights, and that we were willing and anxious to withdraw, if our opponents withdrew with us, and consented to await the decision of the law. So we acted. We informed the neighbouring magistrates of the extent and object of our proposed opposition. How did our opponents behave? On Saturday night, about the dead hour of midnight, a party of them made an entrance into the Meeting-house. On the morning of Sunday, the 1st of May, about four or five o'clock, this 'grey headed and venerable' Mr. Dill, forgetful of his plighted honour and solemn agreement, *stole in* to his worthy confederates. It was truly a *candid declaration* in Dr. Cooke to say, before the Synod of Ulster, that 'one of their body, at an early hour, for the purpose of avoiding us, entered the house.' In the language of Dr. Cooke, I say, let this disgraceful and manœuvring scene of these worthy conspirators, 'go forth through the length and breadth of the land,' and then will the world be at no loss to know why it required an independent and active magistrate to call to order the midnight breakers of the House of God. How Mr. Dill employed himself, within the house, I know not. Perhaps it was planning how he should atone for the consequences of the conflict which his conduct was provoking. 'No,' says Dr. Cooke, 'he was engaged in *various* acts of devotion.' I am told that he spent most of the time in walking through the aisles. My persecuted people do not envy him the feelings with which he must have heard the echo of his own tread along those aisles, —the feelings with which he must have then gazed around the walls that had sheltered their fathers, and within which many a fervent orison of humble and contrite hearts had been breathed to the one undivided spirit of the Heavens. Meantime, a division of Mr. Dill's forces had taken post around the doors. About ten o'clock, my people, not afraid to claim their rights *in the broad light of day*, for their conscience whispered no shaming treachery, no disgraceful breach of faith, advanced, along with myself, towards the doors, and demanded admittance to the house of their forefathers. It was refused. The guard posted outside, under the orders of Mr. Dill, or one of his Lieutenants, and I presume under 'legal advice,' obstructed our approach. We were resisted by force—a struggle took place though no blows were exchanged, and we made our way to the door. And here I do deny the insinuation of Dr. Cooke, that we called to our aid the neighbouring Catholics. There may have been some in the crowd of spectators; I am happy to believe, that I have among them many well-wishers, for I always, *without shift-*

ing, evasion or hypocrisy, advocated the giving to them the same freedom of conscience which I claim for myself: but I do most solemnly aver my belief, that any Catholics about the place were mere spectators, and did not mingle in the business. Some of the seatholders, who came with me, proposed to force open the barricaded door, but I, at a loss how to act, held them back. It would have been done, however, without my assent, when Mr. Ebhardt, C. C. arrived with the Balinahinch police. We told him the directions we had received, and the course we were pursuing,—and that we only wished to preserve our rights, and enforce the observance of our agreement. He saw that a conflict and a riot must ensue, from the determined obstinacy of our opponents. We told him that as we were merely asserting a civil right, we must do so, at whatever risk, and in spite of opposition;—that we could not and would not permit Mr. Dill to preach in that house. He instantly sent off a mounted policeman to Downpatrick, for the assistance of C. C. Dumas, and for Mr. Trotter, the magistrate, who had gone in the morning to town. Mr. Ebhardt begged of us to defer forcing an entrance, and we complied on his assurance, that no one should enter, nor any public service be performed, till the magistrate arrived. About 12 o'clock, Mr. Dumas, C. C. and the magistrate arrived, the one with his police, the other with a detachment of soldiers. Mr. Trotter, on learning the situation of affairs, and seeing that a serious collision was inevitable, determined to do *what Colonel Forde had done on Mr. Dill's first attempt to seize the pulpit*. He resolved to permit neither party to hold the house, when that holding would lead to riot, and, perhaps, to bloodshed. He read the Riot Act both without and within the house, and commanded both parties to disperse. We at once obeyed. Mr. Dill was unwilling to yield the prize which he had so nearly stolen. He hesitated and hung on. When twelve of the fifteen minutes allowed by law for the dispersion, had elapsed, the Magistrate (as I am told,) reminded the recusants that they remained at their peril, that the law which he was administering, allowed them but three minutes more:—that *his duty that the law of the land*, would then compel him to remove them, even though by force: and on this warning given in mercy to the transgressors of the law, Dr. Cooke assails the Magistrate, and thunders forth claptraps about 'Graham, of Claverhouse,' and 'ejected dogs,' and 'tender mercies of dragoons'—and then professes 'ignorance of the law,' and thinks he 'may possibly be ignorant of the facts;' and talks of 'greyheaded men.' How tender has he become! Who heard of his Presbyterian spirit, when a band of leagued persecutors hunted on a deceived landlord to arrest my aged brother, the Minister of Greyabbey,—to threaten him with handcuffs,—to drag him from the pulpit where he had preached for thirty-five years, and to expose his 'grey head' to 'the tender mercies' of the winter wind, and the sleeting rain! My brother broke no compact, provoked no riot, resisted no law; yet, his persecutor received the enraptured thanks of the Rev. Mr. Henderson, a Presbyterian of the Synod of Ulster! Mr. Dill did break his compact, did provoke a riot, did decline to obey the law; and the Magistrate who enforces it is compared to the sangui-

nary Claverhouse, tossing over his victims for murder, to a band of ferocious dragoons ! shame ! shame ! What would Orthodoxy have required the Magistrate to do ? Should he have waited till an affray actually commenced, till the work of battle was joined, and blood, perhaps, began to flow ? Should he have interfered with civil rights, and decided on the spot a disputed claim of possession, and driven us away ; us, who came avowedly and solely to prevent the usurpation of our rights, and did not desire to infringe our compact, or violate public peace ? Should he have driven us away, and bestowed the possession on those whose title was denied, and who sought it illegally, and by violence, and fraud ? Sir, the Magistrate acted impartially, and hence these howlings of Dr. Cooke. Had Mr. Trotter proved the bigotted adherent of a usurping faction, we should have heard his praises rung forth by those who now attack him ; but he steered clear of both parties, and it seems that impartiality does not answer Messrs. Cooke and Dill. But, how comes it, that, *in two days* after the alleged outrage,—this ‘ejected dog,’ as Mr. Dill is rather uncourtously termed by his Reverend Brother, actually issued an invitation to the modern ‘Claverhouse,’ to meet him with a party of military, or a select civil band, on the very next Sunday, at the very same Meeting-house ?—for such to my amazement, I find to be the case, from a copy of Mr. Dill’s own letter, which I have just read in Thursday’s *Whig*. There is ‘something ominous,’ which I do not profess to understand, in this strange crouching to the man who, two short days before, ‘had threatened the Minister of the Synod with death,’ And what are we to think of all the fine things said by Dr. Cooke touching ‘bullets,’ and ‘bayonets,’ and ‘three minutes time,’ and ‘venerable grey heads ?’—what of the cause that solicits a weekly repetition of such scenes ?

“ 5. Dr. Cooke next proceeds to the Royal Bounty, and having misrepresented the state of facts, and the real question in dispute, with more clumsiness than usual, he vapours not a little over his own glorious inventions, which like the celebrated mixture of the renegade Hunt, may be fairly denominated ‘matchless.’ A bounty of 75*l.* by the year is given by Government to the Congregation of Clough for the support of its Minister. The old Congregation has divided into two branches, each having its distinct Minister. Which is entitled to the Bounty ? ‘Mr. Dill,’ answers the Synod of Ulster : ‘Mr. Watson,’ says the Presbytery of Antrim, a body of co-ordinate jurisdiction with the Synod, and equally recognised by the constituted authorities of the land. ‘Which is the original Congregation ?’—the Presbytery and Synod again give different answers. And who is to decide the question ? ‘WE ALONE,’ says Dr. Cooke, ‘can settle the question, and we have already done so by the official certificate of our Moderator.’ Admirable logician ! The Synod claims an endowment for one of its members, mixes as a party in the dispute, and, according to Dr. Cooke, is entitled to enact at once the different parts of *claimant* and *judge*. What a happy tribunal for determining a disputed right ! The Presbytery of Antrim, resisted, however the ‘settlement’ of the Synod ; and by bringing all the facts of the case into full view, exhibiting the grounds of their own claim, and showing the gross misconduct and

manifest partiality of the Synod of Ulster throughout the whole transaction, succeeded in convincing the Government, that the title of Mr. Dill was not just so satisfactory as had been represented; and that a contending party was not of necessity the fairest judge in his own case. The matter was under consideration, and Lord F. L. Gower, our late chief Secretary, assured the Moderator of the Antrim Presbytery, in an official letter, that no decision should be had on this disputed right, without a previous and fair notice to the Presbytery. Lord Francis was called, by his Parliamentary duties, to England; and, during the absence of the Chief Secretary, while the matter was still before him for consideration, *some underhand influence*, which I cannot explain, induced one of the Castle underlings to fill the warrant in favour of Mr. Dill, and present it to the Duke of Northumberland for signature. On the intelligence reaching the Moderator of the Antrim Presbytery, he applied directly to Lord F. Gower, for an explanation of this breach of his Lordship's promise. *The Government*, however is not in the habit of violating its engagements; and, therefore, the answer was speedy and satisfactory. Lord Francis instantly corrected the error that had occurred; and, I have understood, that the underling who usurped the office of the Chief Secretary, and decided, without authority, a case with which he had no business, and concerning which he had got no orders, received for his presumption a check sufficient to prevent the speedy repetition of such conduct. I say, then, that 'the warrant was' *not* 'issued by his Grace of Northumberland in the regular form; and that it did not 'come down to the Agent of Synod in the ordinary manner.' I say, on the contrary, that it was obtained by error, if not by fraud; that it was issued by an unauthorised officer; and that, though its words may have been the same as those in other warrants, yet it was irregular and void.—Yet, on these grounds, has Dr. Cooke gasconaded about 'arresting the King's Bounty in the purlieus of Dublin,' 'honest poverty,' 'the green vales of Ulster'—'the illegality of recalling a Bounty once given'—talked of 'stripping the whole Synod'—fancied himself 'a shorn lamb'—*a lamb!* and anticipated 'being turned out naked on the green hills of Ulster'—for, like the voracious Falstaff, the Dr. 'babbles greatly of green fields,' The absurdity of calling this the commencement of an attempt to strip the Synod is too great. The Presbytery of Antrim is entitled to Bounty, as well as the Synod: the Bounty was given to the Congregation of Clough; and if the government are satisfied, as I hope they will be, that my people constitute that Congregation, and give it to me as their Minister, the compact of 1805 will be fulfilled. Mr. Dill cannot be said to be stripped of *that which he never had, and is not entitled to*; and he need only blame those, who, by their misrepresentations, induced him to accept a call from a number of people, not one individual of whom, as I have been credibly informed, had ever seen or heard him before they asked him to become their Minister. I must also observe, that Dr. Cooke has, in the most extraordinary manner, confounded the question of Bounty, and of title to the Meeting-house. The Government order was issued in consequence of Mr. Dill's attempt on the first of May. No man who reads it, can doubt

that its object was solely to hasten the parties in settling the *title to the house*, and thereby to preserve the public peace; yet Dr. Cooke has treated it as if the Lord-Lieutenant sought to interfere in the ecclesiastical question; and has thus, by descanting on Presbyterian privileges, partially drawn off public attention from his numerous misstatements of facts. He has asserted that ‘as soon as the threat of withdrawing the Bounty was held out, we came forward and proposed to leave the case to *two merchants! Two merchants! to settle a case of ecclesiastical discipline!*’ This is DIRECTLY UNTRUE. We never proposed, and never dreamt of proposing, the reference of any thing *except the rights in the house*, to the arbitration of merchants. We made this proposal, to get the ownership of the House settled with less delay than was likely to be caused by an arbitration of lawyers, and thereby to avoid any chance of collision with Government. As to the question of Bounty, my people are satisfied with the authority which is to decide it, and wish no other judicatory.

“6 ‘I know,’ says the Dr., ‘the capacity of our Arian neighbours, at organizing and conducting a mob. I know, indeed, how easy it were for us to retaliate; but *I thank God*, that I BELIEVE there is not an Orthodox Minister in this body, who would stir up such a spirit, even for the defence of his life.’ Did Dr. Cooke speak this—and Mr. Dill, ‘and they of Greyabbey,’ and of Warrenpoint hear it?

“7 With respect to the legal proceedings, I shall be very brief, as this letter has already far exceeded its intended limits. Arbitration was agreed on; and we nominated Mr. Gilmore, a gentleman (I believe) of the Established Church, and one on whose impartiality we relied. Our opponents named Sergeant Lefroy. We refused to submit to Mr. Lefroy, and assigned our reasons fully. The minds of both parties among the people here, were unfortunately much inflamed by the differences that had arisen; and to make this final decision satisfactory, and one in which all would patiently acquiesce, it was absolutely necessary that the arbitrators should be, not merely men of talent, but men on whose impartiality all could rely, and to whose award all would, therefore, contentedly submit. Such were our views in selecting Counsellor Gilmore; and such, I fearlessly assert, should have been the views of our opponents, *had they honestly desired arbitration*. Mr. Lefroy we declined receiving as our judge, because he was known here chiefly as the violent *Brunswickist*, who had pledged himself to that party which Dr. Cooke had long sedulously endeavoured to associate in his own agitations, and whose political passions were too often veiled by the assumption of particular religious views. We admitted, however, that we understood him, although a mistaken man, to possess both probity and professional talent. We also stated our willingness to receive any objection which the other side might conceive maintainable against Mr. Gilmore.—Unable to answer our objection, our opponents, after some coquetting, named Counsellor Jackson. ‘Be it remembered,’ that they did this with full knowledge of the *principle* on which we had objected to Sergeant Lefroy. They did it, with full knowledge, that our objection was to Mr. Lefroy, not as an individual, but as the partisan of a particular sect. ‘Be it re-

membered' also, that his judgment was to be taken on a point very different from 'the best method of depositing keys.' Our legal agent, without wasting time in writing to us, inquired of our opponents, whether they were really serious in proposing a man whom they knew to be still more objectionable than Mr. Lefroy, and *on the very same grounds* on which we had declined submitting to the latter gentleman. He, at the same time, added, to save farther time, that he considered Counsellor Warren open to the same objection with the other two; but *that there was not another individual at the Irish Bar to whom we should have any reluctance in submitting.* 'Our opponents,' says Dr. Cooke, 'seemed to have a natural antipathy to a religious man!'—'But because we selected arbitrators of a religious character, they reject our nomination, and disable us from proceeding!' Grosser untruth never was spoken. We made one general objection, upon principle; and that objection was not because any individual liable to it was 'a religious man;' but because he was the partisan of a particular sect, and an avowed friend to the principles of our antagonists. We wished for impartial arbitrators; but Dr. Cooke thinks that only *three* such could be found at the Bar—that, out of 2 or 300 lawyers, only 'three religious men' could be found. They refused to accept our last offer, though on what alleged grounds I never could discover. The truth, I believe to be, that they were afraid to nominate men whom they considered unbiassed, and they wanted to gain time for purposes of their own. In the same spirit of veracity, Dr. Cooke has added, that, when the arbitration ended, we feared to proceed with our ejection in the name of the new Trustee; and he has related a story equally absurd and untrue, regarding the manner in which the right to the house was conveyed to us by the heir of the surviving Trustee. I have made the most minute inquiries, and am enabled to declare it untrue, that the old man was imposed upon—or that he was made drunk—or that he was surprised into the signing of the deed—or that he was kept in ignorance of the real nature of his claim to the Meeting-house. The instrument concerning which these charges have been made, is now brought before the Court of Exchequer, where its validity, and the mode in which it was obtained, will be fully and openly discussed. Meantime, I may say, that the old man was fully apprised of the interest which he had to convey, several weeks before the execution of the deed; that it was signed in the house of Mr. Shaw, a friend and neighbour of his own; and that he was perfectly sober, collected and sensible, when he signed it. True, indeed, I am credibly informed, that certain individuals have threatened to turn the old man out of doors, and to expose him to 'the tender mercies' of the elements, because he dared to give us the legal ownership of the house; yet, he has several times expressed (even since the 'probing' visit of Dr. Cooke and his Attorney,) the satisfaction he felt for having helped to give us a better title than our opponents have. I could give an account, that would excite some astonishment, of the arts which have been used, and the means resorted to, for the purpose of deluding the old man, and turning him against us; but I avoid, for the present, saying more, as the whole facts will be shortly laid before the

Judges of the Exchequer; and, to their decision, I fearlessly appeal. As to our alleged 'fear of going before a Down Jury,' the charge is equally true with the others on which I have been commenting. The arbitration did not end sufficiently long before the March Assizes, for our Attorney to collect and prepare for trial at that time, the evidence, which, I understand, was necessary to be produced. We would, however, have been ready, and were determined to try the question at the Assizes now approaching, had our opponents not gone into the Exchequer, and obtained an order for us to delay our proceeding, till we should answer their allegations. In that Court, we shall meet the Rev. Doctor and his friends. Let them not be too sanguine. A case which requires the means resorted to by them, is not a good one.

"I am sorry that this letter has proved so long, but I felt anxious to correct the principal falsehoods in Dr. Cooke's speech. I do not envy him the feelings with which he must look back upon his extraordinary statements; but I have known him too long, to be much surprized by his attacks upon me and my people. It is however, ineffectual.

I am Sir, &c. &c.,
Clough, Sat., 16th July, 1831.

D. WATSON,
Presbyterian Minister."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We received two Communications in reply to a 'Letter addressed to a Literary Lady' in our last, and one is actually in type, but we have not room to give any of them insertion. We are in the same difficulty with many other articles, but we shall give them proper attention in due time.

In reply to a query from a Correspondent, we can inform him, that, the Tracts recommended by the Unitarian Society for the diffusion of Christian Knowledge are sold by Mr. Archer, 33, High-Street, Belfast.

We are requested to state, that, at the desire of a number of members of the First Congregation of Presbyterians in this town, the address to Dr. Bruce and his reply on the occasion of his receiving a rich service of plate on retiring from the duties of the Congregation, is published in a neat form by Mr. Hodgson.

THE
Bible Christian.

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SEPTEMBER, 1831.

VOL. II.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

REVIEW OF "A LETTER TO A LITERARY LADY."

SIR,—My principal object, in the following remarks, is to obviate the objections alleged against mental and moral Science as a fit study for Ladies, by the author of a letter which appeared in your last Number, signed Erasmus. Having accomplished this object, if you can afford me space, I may perhaps drop a word or two on the opinions which report says are current in the synod of Ulster, respecting the mode in which the above sciences ought to be taught.

I pass over as not requiring particular notice, the introductory remarks of Erasmus.

The study of the mind, we are, in the first place, told, is considered by all who have engaged in it, to be totally unworthy of cultivation. "For my own part," says the author, "I never met with any individual, who addicted himself to such studies, after they ceased to be a task." Perhaps not—Erasmus may have been peculiarly situated. Indeed, it is to be confessed and lamented, that few individuals after completing their course of professional studies, think of prosecuting them to any extent. The classics are laid aside; logic, rhetoric, and natural philosophy are no more seriously thought of; while Euclid if not sold, is allowed to sleep quietly on the shelf. All this is true, and all this will continue to be true, till some change take place in the mode of administering instruction weekly to the people. From the kind of instruction thus frequently dealt out, one would never suppose that the instructors had ever studied any thing but the shorter catechism. There are bright exceptions, but the above is just respecting the multitude. But what then? Are we to conclude that

the studies thus abandoned are useless? This surely were the height of folly. It is not unimportant to observe, however,, that although Erasmus never may have "met with individuals" who cultivated the science of mind after it "ceased to be a task," many such individuals have existed, and do exist. Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Hartley, Mill, may be mentioned as leading individuals of this description. I need not tell Erasmus, that Locke was a statesman, that Berkeley was a Bishop, that Hume was addicted to literature generally, that Hartley was a physician, and that Mill is at present one of our most distinguished politicians, and political writers. The same remark holds good of professional writers upon the subject.—Reid, Campbell, Stewart and Brown, previous to entering their respective chairs, "addicted themselves to such studies." They did so, when it is not possible they could have had any view to collegiate appointments. Were they competent to judge of the worth of the study?

In the second place we are informed, that the most distinguished metaphysicians have uniformly failed to excite an interest in the public for their pursuits. Suppose this to be the case, it is not difficult to find a reason for it, different from that assigned by Erasmus—the uselessness of mental science. This study has no *immediate* connection with the making of money—it demands in order to its successful prosecution, a greater degree of mental application, than the generality of men are willing to bestow; and the benefits which it promises are, unfortunately, not such as the world are inclined duly to appreciate, freedom from prejudice, and a power to detect all manner of sophistry. Besides, the language required in this department of inquiry is the simplest and exactest possible. It rejects, as at once inadequate and inappropriate all poetic and oratorical figures, which, while they delight the fancy, are fruitless in information. These are reasons, why men of the greatest eminence in the science have never been able to obtain for it the attention of the multitude. For similar reasons mathematical Science has never been popular. In what quarter of the earth have mathematicians succeeded in drawing men of business, or pleasure to take an interest in their pursuits? Are mathematics therefore useless?

I question, however, the accuracy of the entire representation. Works of real merit on the mind, never yet failed to command a large share of public attention. The Essay on the Human Understanding was better received when it first appeared than the *Paradise Lost*. And I am certain it effected a much greater change in the sentiments of society throughout Europe, than any other book, down to the period of the *Wealth of Nations*. Performances of this sort never, it is true, can boast of having had readers and admirers, all at once, equal in number to those of the successive novels of Scott; but who wonders at that, or would mention it in proof of the total indifference of mankind to the subjects of which they treat? Again, as a branch of academical education, it is decidedly the most popular and the most profitable. For one that takes a lively interest in the prelections of the physical inquirer, five at least enter with zeal into those of the mental. Unless where an obvious disparity exists in the talents of the several teachers, we shall find this to be the state of things in all our places of learning. In a word, I ask Erasmus to point out a department of scientific investigation, *not immediately connected with manufacturing employments*, which is pursued by a larger portion of educated men either here or elsewhere, than are, and have been engaged in cultivating some one quarter or other of the extensive field of mental and ethical science. The complaints on this head, all things considered, have always seemed to me unreasonable or absolutely groundless. If people would but recollect, that there is but a little body of really learned men, in any one of the sciences in the whole country, they would cease to cant about the slight encouragement which the student of mind receives from the example of those around him. He is really not worse off than his neighbour mathematicians, natural philosophers, chemists, and, if you please, divines.

Third—That which engages the Intellectual inquirer is not a *Science*. Erasmus is much at a loss to devise a name for it. At last he proposes to adopt that of a *theory* or *speculation*, provided he be allowed to prefix the epithet “vague” to it. “A science you know,” says he “is a system of demonstrative propositions; but here we neither have axioms, nor are the terms capa-

ble of logical definitions—the simple powers of the mind being simple ideas.”

Taking the above as a just definition of a science, what follows? That we have notwithstanding all our boasted progress in knowledge, but one science, that of mathematics. The author is lucky in having hit upon a favorite opinion of Mr. Locke, who considered what are called the natural sciences as quite unworthy of the name. Is Erasmus prepared to abide by this notion? If so, then let the ladies, for whose sake he writes, distinctly understand that the study in which they were lately, with so much pleasure, employed, has precisely the same claim to the title of science, that natural philosophy, in all its numerous branches, enjoys. The letter writer will excuse me, however, in refusing to accept his definition of a science. Public opinion the sole disposer of the meaning of words, has decreed that the name in question shall be awarded to those *truths* which, in their collective state, pass likewise by the different appellations of chemistry, physics, and pneumatology. But truly it is not worth our while to quarrel about names, if we can manage to make up matters about things. Are the statements recorded by the chemist, the physical and mental inquirer, accordant with experience? Are they truths, and can they be made available to human advantage? This is the question, and the only question which a man deliberating whether he shall enter on the study of either, has a reasonable right to put; not whether the name of *science* or the name of “art” be fit or unfit to denote them by. As an investigator of mind, I care not what designation the public agree to give me, if under it, I be making myself acquainted with the laws which, with the steadiness of gravitation in the material universe, regulate the feelings that constitute the sum of my earthly consciousness; if I be gathering new and impressive evidences of the wisdom and beneficence of my heavenly parent; be detecting the stable foundations of human duty; and acquiring additional motives to love and promote the interests of my kind.

I lament that the individual in question, in common with so many, is so much influenced by mere sounds, that he would turn away from substantial knowledge, and occupy his time in trying to divert others

from it, especially the female part of the community, who have hitherto been so shamefully neglected in their education, merely because that knowledge has not received the name which is most grateful to his ear. That I may recover him from this hurtful and unmanly state of feeling, permit me to draw one remark from the stores of the metaphysician.—All knowledge, if it be genuine, i. e. if it be knowledge at all, is alike certain, and for any thing we can say, is capable of an application favourable to the happiness of man. The knowledge of the human mind, of its states, and of the general facts or laws which rule them in their ceaseless succession, when real, i. e. when Knowledge, is capable of constant and universal application, in respect to all matters relating to the rights, the obligations, the happiness of the species. It is in consequence of the world's being in possession of but a limited portion of this knowledge, and its taking up erroneous opinions concerning mind, for knowledge, that men have enacted so many foolish and sanguinary laws—that they hold so many of their brethren in bondage, and that they have continued for thousands of years to entertain, and cherish with the fondest affection the rankest absurdities, calling them by the imposing name of religion—that they have conscientiously, that is with the intention of doing good, persecuted one another for the sake of producing unanimity in error. I feel confident, that in making this statement, Erasmus will acquit me of “theorizing or speculating.” He knows that its justice is verified by the voice of history, and particularly by the annals of our own Island. It is not too much to say, that in a vast variety of cases, civil, moral, and religious men, have treated each other, *not as men*, not as they are, not as they are found, from a fair, diligent, and full examination of their intellectual constitutions, to be, not as God has formed them, but as something totally different. Were not this the case, would ever the gibbet or the stake, have been exhibited to convince them of error? Were not this the case, would the reign of Aristotle and the schoolmen ever have begun, or been prolonged over so many dreary centuries? Why, sir, it is the knowledge of mind, that has now happily freed us, in this comparatively blessed land, from both these evils. You and some others may be disposed to

deny this, and to affirm, that this salvation is to be traced to religion. But this is nonsense: Religion demanded its victims; it hired and paid the schoolmen; it waged war with science; it imprisoned Galileo; it forbade the study of the *Principia* of Newton; it is at this hour preaching down geology, pronouncing its anathemas against mental and moral inquiries, and sneering at philosophy in the mass.

Erasmus will say, it is not *religion* that has done, and is doing these mischiefs; it is and was the priest-hood. Be it so, and I admit it is so, but it will be allowed me, that not only has this been the practice of the priest-hood in all ages, countries, and tongues, but that it has been carried on, under the mask of religion. And what, I would ask, is to keep their domination in check? Why, knowledge, and more especially the knowledge of man. This knowledge must, if possible, be forced upon themselves; and in order to force it upon them, it must, in the first instance, be as widely as may be, diffused throughout the influential ranks of the community. For, it has invariably happened that the church has followed, always at a great distance, never preceded the community in the career of knowledge.

I take the liberty, here, to hint a word of counsel to the brethren, though I confess, with no hope of being listened to. Let the young clergy, from whom the better educated of the public expect any thing like a reflection of the spirit of the age, put forth their most powerful efforts to save the body to which they belong, from sinking still farther into merited disrespect. No person, aware of the mighty movements that are going forward in the heart and farthest extremities of society at present, for the purpose of *enlightening*, can doubt, that very soon, if the clergy do not bestir themselves, they will be left, like a stranded vessel, far behind the majority of their hearers in sound information. For twenty years, they have been working by means of *tracts* to consume the little leisure which the labouring classes have for reading, without having accomplished one particle of good for them as rational beings. They must change their plan, else the society for the diffusion of *useful* knowledge will wreck their cause. Such trash as blackguard boys go about vending for a penny, will be laughed to scorn by every one, who, by the co-ope-

ration of a few neighbours, can command the sixpenny number of the society.

As a proof of the *vagueness* of the doctrines advanced by mental philosophers, Erasmus refers his fair readers to their speculations respecting belief in the existence of a material world. The merits of the question are, as is usual with declaimers about it, imperfectly understood by him. His picture of David Hume, at which he seems to have made himself exceedingly merry, proves this. He is much mistaken in supposing that Dr. Reid succeeded in setting the notions of the idolator aside. The doctor merely begged the question in dispute. He assumed what cannot be granted, with a view to disprove what cannot, when rightly apprehended, be denied.

Our author is mightily in love with "common sense," the instrument by which he supposes Reid "broke the spell," by which he says "the philosophical world was entranced in profound scepticism." "Common sense," is a phrase freely and frequently employed by all shallow thinkers, and they imagine that nothing more than an appeal to this "sense," is necessary in order to scout every thing which their thoughts cannot penetrate.

Erasmus, having taken upon himself to be the adviser of the ladies in their studies, and having avowed his determination to put himself under the guidance of "common sense," with whom he prays that his "soul may dwell," would perhaps have rendered no unacceptable service to the fair had he told them what they are to understand by it. Is it a sense in addition to the vulgar five? No. Does it mean the notions of the majority of our race upon all manner of subjects? No, for in that case it would have kept the world in the darkness of barbarism, and we should have been still of opinion that the earth sits still, and the sun wheels round her. Does it stand for the notions which prevail among such as have obtained a smattering of learning? No, for that would be giving up the point altogether. Besides, that kind of sense is varying with every varying season; what was common sense last winter, may be nonsense the next. It seems, then, somewhat difficult to tell what "common sense" is. I strongly suspect that it denotes in philosophy, what orthodox denotes in religion—the opinions of the most numerous party. Per-

haps it is this analogy that has mainly contributed to recommend it to the affection of Erasmus. The principle which I adopt in my humble vocation, is to inquire with all possible candour and diligence, making use of all the lights which the labours of others have struck out, and then to close with the results. This principle seems to me preferable to every other. His "common sense" would, in many instances, lead Erasmus into dogmatism, of which philosophy is abhorrent; but my principle perpetually inclines me to comply with that best of all, but least of all appreciated maxims of the apostle, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Upon the whole, if "common sense" drive men as it did Dr. Reid to appeal from the reflecting and well instructed few, to the thoughtless and ill-informed multitude, in proof of philosophical positions, we must beg leave to decline its guidance even at the risk of forfeiting the good-will and patronage of the ladies, and what is not less valuable, the smiles of the church.

Fourth—The aversion of the ladies to mental science is attempted to be excited by holding up the views of our successive writers upon the subject as *remarkably conflicting*. "Brown was the idol for a time, notwithstanding the alarm taken by the clergy, at the apparently atheistical tendency of his doctrine of cause and effect. At present, Mill appears to have gained the ascendant. Now, my dear madam, I cannot think that this ever-veering philosophy is a profitable study for desultory readers or casual hearers."

In reference to all this, I must remind Erasmus, that authors on this branch of philosophy, like many on other branches, are generally ambitious to be considered originals, but that not seldom their claims to so rare an honour, turn out when carefully inspected, to be very dubious. They differ more, not altogether, but more in arrangement and nomenclature, than in doctrine. Brown, for example, apart from the disposition of his materials, and the symbols he employs, coincides in his leading views with Reid, Hartley, and Hume; while, it is notorious, that the last derived from Locke and Berkely much that is valuable in his writings. With respect to Brown, the above remark must be understood to apply to his posthumous lectures only—his work upon causation has extended, or more correctly has, for the first time, ascertained the legitimate boundaries of

all science. It is painful to hear the clergy and their childish alarms coupled with such a production. Mill, again, with the exception of his unapproached gift of analysis, which is by far the most valuable quality in a mental philosopher, has attempted and effected little more than the establishment of Hartley's views concerning association. I may, however, remark, in passing, that no one entitled to form an opinion on the subject will from what I have said, charge me with a design to rate the labours of Mill as inconsiderable. Upon the whole between Locke, the earliest, and Mill the latest of our writers, there is far less discrepancy than might have been expected from the length of the period which separates them.

Reid's school, or that of instincts, stands no doubt almost alone. Stewart, by the lustre of his style will throw over it a protection that may serve to embalm it for a while, but nothing will save it from sinking sooner or later to the grave of oblivion.

I was agreeably surprised at one of the statements hazarded in the above quotations from Erasmus, respecting the author of the analysis of the *Phænomena of the Human Mind*. Is it so, that he has superseded, in public favour, the eloquent and acute writer of the *Essay on Cause and Effect*? I require for this better authority, (I trust to be forgiven,) than that of Erasmus. Mill is too simply logical, too much given to state his views in a plain unvarnished style, (though as far from vulgarity, as the poles are distant,) to be able so soon to catch the attention of even the reading and thinking portion of the community. If he shall contrive to keep himself alive for ten years, I shall be contented. If alive in 1841, he will live for ever. The *Edinburgh Reviewers*, as if seized by a fit of phrenzy, tried to crush him, but the attempt nearly cost them their character. Neglect proves fatal to most writers. Their attack has had the effect, I earnestly trust, of drawing more into view, than they otherwise would, at this early period, have been, his unmatched productions. For, who that has read his article upon Government, assailed in the *Review*, will grudge giving two months' serious reading to his work on the *Human Mind*? We have had no writer equal to Mill since the days of Chillingworth. I wish the Synod of Ulster, in order to redeem the character of a few of their number

from the contempt of all educated men, would appoint the *Select Committee* to draw up an abstract of the aforesaid book, on the mind, as a manual for their students, for whose infantine understandings they are in such pain. But I am forgetting Erasmus. To stick by my text—it is surely a little unreasonable in Mr. Erasmus to insist on the ladies abandoning the study in question, merely from the conflict of statement which is occasionally met with among those who have, on the whole, contributed to the advancement of our knowledge of man. Try this argument, whether it will not, like some of his former ones, carry him too far, whether it will not make it imperative on women to cultivate ignorance as their greatest safety. For a long time, and still, no two books upon chemistry were found to agree in their doctrines; nay, no two editions of the same book. What then? Why, “I cannot think that this ever-veering philosophy, is a profitable study for desultory readers or casual hearers.” Still further—no two books of divinity that are worth reading, present exactly similar accounts of revelation; nay more, no two preachers that are worth hearing, give nearly the same account of the most important passages of scripture. What then? Why, “I cannot think that this ever-veering theology is a profitable study for desultory readers or casual hearers.” Is the logic of the one application not as good as that of the other? But whence all this fear of the ladies? Do you take them for such consummate ninnies that they can by no means of training be brought to judge, with safety to themselves, upon any one subject of general interest? Though you have not plainly avowed that this is your belief respecting them, it seems difficult to reconcile your fears with any other. I know your “common sense philosophy” will lead you to this creed, because it will put the matter to, and carry it by vote. I trust however, that the modesty which is so natural to the sex, will not cause them to flee to ignorance as a refuge from error, but that the imputation cast upon them will have the effect of raising them to such exertions as will establish their claim to the rank of reasonable and accountable creatures.

A review of the remainder of the letter, will appear in the next number.

GENUINE LETTER FROM A YOUNG UNITARIAN TO AN OLD CALVINIST.

The following Letter is the genuine, unaltered production of a very young gentleman, the native sweetness of whose truly Christian spirit, a bigoted Calvinist in vain attempted to sour. Would to God, that all the rising generation were imbued with such sentiments. We might then anticipate the coming of bright and happy days.—EDITORS.

My Dear Sir,—Though highly flattered by the notice you have been pleased to take of Mr. Fawcett's discourse in your letter of the 22d, and still more gratified by the desire therein evinced to enlighten me upon the most important of all subjects, I should perhaps nevertheless have merely consigned them to silent reflection, under a conviction of my inability profoundly to discuss or elucidate a subject so awfully sublime: but a sense of duty to this eloquent Teacher of Christianity, imperiously demands my weak efforts in his praise, and I approach the subject under a firm persuasion, that you will impartially view, and liberally construe, the genuine effusions of a youthful and inexperienced mind, eager in its pursuit after Truth, and deeply impressed with the primary importance of a just conception of our holy and ever glorious Religion. I must here pause to express my regret, that you did not longer retain the volume which I handed you, as by further exploring its contents you would have found in other discourses, that Mr. Fawcett, repeatedly declares, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. The sermon upon pure and spiritual worship, was especially noticed, because it was considered to contain a comprehensive summary of the divine doctrine, which he and his disciples promulgated to mankind, clothed in glowing language, and by a happy application to the duties of life, rendered completely intelligible to every capacity.

That his scheme of Religion "is inconsistent with the state of the world, as determined by the universal experience of mankind," whether an admitted fact or not, proves nothing against the soundness of his doctrine, as it is a lamentable truth, that the same remark will apply with equal force to every description of christian worshippers.

God has truly made a system for man, and promulgated it by the Saviour of the world, which no one

since has ever exemplified; yet I hope and trust, that the true believers in that system, will continue to increase, until their numbers cover the earth, "as the waters cover the deep." If the universal experience of mankind were to be any test of true religion—depraved indeed might the system be considered; but blessed be God, he has given us better light, and the nearer we follow the advice and practice of his Son, the more acceptable will we render ourselves to the Creator. He has thought proper to endow us with passions, and expose us to temptations, which seem likely, ever to forbid a close approach to that inimitable example; yet every pious mind conceives it to be the first duty to aim at imitating his matchless purity, and his practice of every virtue. And hence it results, that religion being "inconsistent with the state of the world, as determined by the universal experience of mankind," in no degree militates against its purity or correctness. You say that "the doctrines inculcated by Mr. Fawcett's sermon, are contrary to the doctrines taught in the holy scriptures," but from this sentiment I must entirely dissent, and, if whilst endeavouring to establish their coincidence, I should trespass on your patience, the importance of the subject, will, I hope, plead my excuse and justification. You will, I apprehend, readily admit, that the chief end of the christian dispensation, was the promotion of human welfare, by bringing life and immortality to light in the resurrection of Jesus, and by promoting a system of morality, admirably calculated to increase our happiness here, and secure the blessings of eternal felicity hereafter. Unfortunately for the children of men, it enjoins duties which can be performed only by perfect or unsinning beings. Yet surely it is nevertheless our bounden duty to strive after perfection, for as much as we endeavour to fulfil those divine commands, "will our labour not be in vain." Our Saviour says, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," and are not they the purest of moral precepts? Mr. Fawcett, delivers sentiments entirely in unison, when he says the most perfectly pure and spiritual worship of God, is the practice of virtue. "Love your enemies and do good and lend—hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great." What is this but a sacrifice of our faculties upon the broad immortal altar

of society? "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven," and what is this but saying, "devotedness to society is the truest dedication to God: to go on an errand of mercy, is to set out on the only holy pilgrimage. All other worship considered independently of this, contains no degree of recommendation to the divine Being." It would be endless to quote every instance of coincidence of sentiment, between Mr. Fawcett's discourse and the scriptures. Indeed, if there be any difference, it involves itself into this simple question.—Is the practice of virtue the essence of Religion?

The universal experience of mankind, proves the frailty of human nature, and a review of the history of the world, but too clearly shows, that all, excepting our divine Master, have fallen far short of perfection; yet the sacred volume does not less clearly exhibit, that many great and good men have appeared, whose imperfections have been almost obliterated by the bright effulgence of their virtues. A few of the first of them, received especial marks of divine favour, and all of them have been cherished in grateful remembrance by succeeding generations, who have hoped and believed, that their noble and virtuous exertions whilst here, would secure to them a crown of glory hereafter.

This, you will say, is reasoning upon the doubtful promises of the light of nature; but thanks to the Most High, the scriptures do still powerfully exhibit the necessity and utility of practising virtue. What are the Ten Commandments delivered by the Lord unto Moses, but rules of action, comprising the purest morality—the love of God, the foundation of holiness; and the practice of his commands, the fruits and evidence of that love? The memorial of virtue is immortal: because it is approved by God and men, it weareth a crown and triumpheth for ever.

But in still happier and more glorious times, when the Saviour of sinners appeared to preach "glad tidings of joy and salvation to mankind," how are we then instructed to glorify God? Not by meeting on a particular day, in a particular place, with a particular ceremony, and with particular words professing to love Him. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them,

he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father." The spirit of religion is the love of rectitude; rectitude living, and realized in the Divine Nature—the exercise of religion is the practice of that rectitude; and its essence is to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. What, I would ask, is the history of Christ's sojourn on earth, but a beautiful description of acts of mercy and of love, and an unerring evidence, that the practice of virtue is the most acceptable of all services? What else could have induced Him to oppose the prejudices of the Jews, respecting the sabbath, by curing the man with the withered hand upon that day, but to prove to them, that although the Lord said, thou shalt do no work on the sabbath day, yet to do good on that or any other day, is the most acceptable of all services? If ye love me keep my commandments.—The first is, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind,—and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This was placing christian duty upon a more expanded scale of benevolence, than had ever before been thought of, as exemplified so beautifully in the case of the good Samaritan, which shews that the neighbour is he who requires the good offices. The neighbour is man.—"Should we only love them that love us, what reward have we? Do not even the publicans the same?" But we should remember, "be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." It doth not follow, if we fall short of perfection, that our labour will be in vain; but on the contrary, as almost every duty in life is specifically expressed, the natural and fair conclusion is, that in as much as we succeed in performing those duties,—in that proportion will be our reward. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be called the children of God;" and still farther consolation do we find, in perceiving that not the most trifling action when done from a good motive is without its good effects; for "whosoever shall give to drink unto one, of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." In truth, the Scriptures throughout, abound with commands and inducements, to obtain the favour of heaven, by obedience to the law, which is the practice of virtue.

What can be more inviting to the performance of good actions than this, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother?" And how comprehensive is the exhortation of St. Paul, when he sums up his address to the Philippians in these words. "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Does not this precisely correspond with Mr. Fawcett's idea, when he says "the contemplation of Deity is devotion at rest—the execution of his commands, is devotion in action."

Industry from a sense of duty, is religion in the shop or in the field—commercial integrity is religion in the mart. The communication of consolation is religion in the house of mourning, and parental instruction is religion at the hearth. The scriptures say, "make your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven;" and again "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. By their fruits ye shall know them." Expressly is it said, "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." And hence, I naturally, and I hope fairly conclude, that the duty of divine teachers is not alone, to bring us up in the love of God; but to teach us also, what is like thereunto, to love our neighbour as ourselves; or in other words, to practise virtue, to know that the love of God and our neighbour are like unto each other, that religion and morality are not distinct things, but the same. Let none dare to separate them—unite them like the good tree and the good fruit, lest some unenlightened though honest hearts, should conceive, that the path of duty is not the only road to heaven. Endeavour to impress upon all, the firm conviction, that Jesus Christ, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Persuade them with Mr. Fawcett, to believe that every thought and action, is noticed by the Most High; that from those to whom little has been given, little will be expected; but that all have their duty to per-

form, and that wherein good is done from a good motive, it is an office of religion and will meet its reward. "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." I look in vain for a distinction between morality and religion, in the word of God, and am therefore firmly persuaded that the practice of virtue is the essence of religion, and by the grace of God the true way to Him. Far be it from me, to conceive or insinuate that the most perfect amongst us has a just claim to salvation; for too well am I convinced that all have fallen short of the law; but I am firmly persuaded, that in as much as we imitate the purity, and follow the precepts of the Son, will we be acceptable. Though only through the grace of God can we be saved, yet I hope it is not going too far to think, that all who use their best efforts to live soberly, righteously and godly, will be pleasing objects and successful petitioners in the sight of Him who made us—"who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." Although by the grace of God, "we are saved through faith;" yet, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." We ought to be, and I hope thoroughly are, convinced, that it is of God's mercy that we are not consumed; and that our chief reliance for acceptance must be upon his goodness and love: but do sentiments like these which every true christian must feel, at all lessen the value of good works? Should they not rather impel us to increased activity in the practice of them, so that we may exhibit to our Father who is in Heaven, good fruits arising from our faith in the Redeemer?

The Saviour of the world well knew our weakness, and He likewise knew we would fall short of the law; yet on all occasions does he impress the belief, that as we perform our duty, in that proportion will be our reward; and although he promises pardon and acceptance to the penitent, it is only on condition that they forsake their evil ways, and learn to do well—"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man *according* to his works." If the morality of the gospel be the true guide of christian conduct, we are surely bound by every tie, human and divine, to practise it; and where our Saviour says, in these cheering and con-

soling words, (which you quote,) "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He tells us at the same time, how we are to come unto him—"take my yoke upon you and learn of me;" or in other words, let the glory of God, and the happiness of all his creatures be the motive and end of all your thoughts and actions.

If Mr. Fawcett's doctrine, as I hope, has been fully established, corresponds with the morality of the gospel, then is he fully warranted in the nature of his invitation to hearers, and in the place of finding any thing austere or forbidding in the passage which you quote, I think it breaths the true christian sentiment, the words of truth, "I invite no attendance here that proceeds from such a principle." But what is the principle? The faith that would seek in the temple of God an escape from morality. To such he has no comfort to offer, no shelter to hold out—theirs is faith without works, which is dead: the christians who endeavour to do well and strive to overcome the world, he invites cordially to come to the sanctuary, as to the fortress of their virtue amidst the temptations of life, as to a Tower of moral security in this state of moral danger.

If the preceding remarks shall be found calculated in any weak degree, to remove the unfavourable impressions which you have received of the doctrines of this christian teacher, it would be a source of much satisfaction to me; and I should in such event, take the liberty of attempting their entire eradication, by endeavouring to induce you to take a full view of his religious sentiments, by a perusal of the remainder of his discourses. They are contained in two volumes, and I esteem them, together with four volumes of Zollikofer's, an eminent divine who resided at Leipsic, as the most valuable gift of my Father—a never-failing source of instructive consolation, and serving as a species of talisman by which to guide or test the purity of my actions. And I prize them the more highly from a cause which I shall mention to you in confidence, whilst it may excite your surprise. I go often to church in hopes of being made wiser and better, but I return almost always disappointed. It is true, the source of our religion, the love and fear of God, and faith in his Son, is still emphatically declared to us. But an attempt

is rarely ever made to exhibit the blessed effects attendant upon a just conception of that love, fear, and faith, in the practice of the duties which they enjoin. We are seldom told that if we truly love and fear God, we must keep his commandments, or that faith in the Saviour is only known by the fruits which it produces.

Instead of displaying these sentiments clothed in the attractive dress of persuasive eloquence, beautifully illustrated in the lives of departed saints, or rendered still more interesting by a happy application to our daily pursuits; instead thereof, I say, (and it is with the deepest regret I make the remark,) efforts are rather made to damp the ardour of the virtuous by taking every opportunity of warning us and imploring the aid of heaven to prevent us from placing any reliance upon the efficacy of good works. I appeal to you, my dear sir, I appeal to every man of understanding capable of searching the Scriptures, and free from the trammels of prejudice, if sentiments like these do not indirectly tend to undermine the value of good works, and to relax our efforts in the practice of virtue. Can such doctrine be called christian? When our Saviour has declared in his sermon on the Mount, "that good fruits cannot spring from a corrupt tree, and that by their fruits ye shall know them," can language be more clear and explicit than this? can sentiments be more in unison with the commands of God and the light of reason and experience? Their mistaken interpretation, (as I view it,) of the divine law, unsupported by any substantial argument, excepting the apprehension that attaching any value to works might inspire the pride of self-righteousness, a feeling entirely unchristian, which the divine author of our religion reprobates in these words—"I am meek and lowly in heart," this mistaken interpretation I say, might be passed over without much warmth of remark, by you or me, or any other person who has had the good fortune to receive a liberal education, and has leisure and opportunity to read the Scriptures, and judge for himself; but when we consider that a majority of our fellow-worshippers are so occupied in toiling for their daily bread, that they have no means of procuring food for the mind, except when they visit the house of God upon the sabbath, it then becomes materially important that the

doctrine of christianity should not only be correctly expounded, but that it should be displayed in its most captivating and attractive light, aptly calculated to arrest the attention, and convince the judgment of those humble hearers. Care should also be taken to convey its solemn injunctions in the simplest form; and if works are admitted to be a criterion of faith, might not the happiest effects arise from telling them that the Almighty commands that they should be pious, just, and good, industrious, affectionate, and generous, and their reward shall be great; that they are to honour their father and mother, that their days may be long in the land which the Lord their God hath given unto them; and that the Redeemer of the world, who says, that their first duty is to God, says, that the second, which is like thereunto, is to love their neighbour?

Sentiments like these are level to every capacity, and speak peace to every pious mind. They attract the attention of the young by their simplicity and wisdom, and make lasting impressions upon maturer hearts, by their congeniality with the finest feelings of our nature. Oh ye good Shepherds of the christian flock be kind unto your sheep, and keep them in the right way by every act of winning persuasion, and sound in the ears of all, the glad tidings of salvation, and inspire their hearts with a love of righteousness and of devotedness to the service of Heaven. So will they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, and secure to themselves a crown of glory, immortal, incorruptible, and that that fadeth not away. Teach them that he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; that the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall perish: that happy is the man who findeth wisdom, for her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: and entreat them not to enter into the path of the wicked—avoid it—pass not by it—turn from it, and pass away—but that the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The preceding remarks are submitted to your perusal, under the persuasion that you will view them with that spirit of charity that “beareth all things and rejoiceth in the truth.” Utterly disclaiming all pretensions to pride of opinion, I shall feel happy in having my errors pointed out; although I by no means presume to solicit that

favour from you, lest it might intrude upon your avocations, or interfere with more weighty duties. I shall conclude by quoting a beautiful invocation of one of the greatest favourites of the muses, your pious countryman Thomson, who esteemed the practice of virtue so highly, that when the winter of life closes here, he considers that "virtue sole survives, immortal never failing friend of man, his guide to happiness on high."

"Father of light and life! thou good supreme!
Oh teach me what is good—teach me thyself—
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure,
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss."

I salute all men of respectability with regard, but I should poorly express my feelings towards you, who have taken pains to enlighten and instruct me, if I did not add thereto my affectionate esteem. F— W—.

THE TEMPLE OF THE HEART.

There is a temple fables say,
Alone amid the briny deep;
No pilgrims there their homage pay,
Or vigils o'er its altars keep.
But countless birds of snowy hue
Around its hallowed portals play,
Plunge in the waves, or else pursue
Their flight, amid the airy spray.
Then back upon their wings they bear,
The chrystal drop, the snowy foam,
To sprinkle o'er the pavement, where
No human step can ever roam.
Oh that my heart could thus remain,
A temple holy, calm, and pure,
Where human idols ne'er might reign,
Or taint of human kind endure:
That every thought with stainless wing
Above life's stormy sea should sweep,
And back upon its pinions bring,
The treasures of a boundless deep:
And cleanse from every taint of earth
Each secret nook, each altar stone,
Until it stand, as at its birth—
A temple formed for God alone.

Belfast, 7th August, 1831.

R. P.

The Island alluded to is the Ilan Adase, or Phidonisi, in the Black Sea, near the mouths of the Danube. Vide Dr. Clarke's *Travels, Voyage from Odessa*, Volume 2d, page 397.

LETTERS TO THE PRESBYTERIANS OF IRELAND.

No. III.

(Continued from Page 116.)

BRETHREN,—I regret, that various avocations have prevented me from continuing my Letters, with so much regularity as you had reason to expect. Like other sinners, however, I *intend* to amend my ways, and to leave you no future cause of complaint—at least on the ground of negligence. Having thus confessed my sins and promised amendment, I shall endeavour, without farther preface, to prove that I have not made an insincere profession.

In my *First Letter*, I had the great satisfaction of addressing such of you as have honestly cast off the trammels of human authority in matters of faith, and determined, at all hazards, “to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free: in my *Second Letter*, I executed the less agreeable, but more important task, of candidly admonishing those amongst you, who, in their hearts, entirely disapprove of the intolerant proceedings of the General Synod of Ulster, and utterly disbelieve the gloomy doctrines of Calvinism, whilst, for temporal interest or convenience, from lukewarmness, timidity, or false views of duty, they continue to wear the galling yoke of bondage: and, on the present occasion, I shall address those of you who conscientiously adhere to Presbyterian bodies, in which the sufficiency of Scripture and the Right of Private Judgment are virtually denied, whilst the doors of admission to the churches are opened and closed, according to the mere will and humour of a few fallible and sinful men.

Observe, my brethren, I am about to address those of you who are *sincere* and *honest*, in the profession of those doctrines which are commonly termed *orthodox*. It would be equally absurd and unprofitable, to waste time and language upon those worthless leaders and partizans amongst you, who profess what they do not believe, in order to secure popularity or gain, to gratify vanity or ambition, or to wreak their vengeance upon men that spurned their dictation, and whom they could

neither intimidate nor seduce. Having already disowned the authority of Him "who desireth *truth* in the inward parts," and despised the whisperings of "the still, small voice of conscience," it would be vain to hope, that the words of man should "turn them from the evil of their ways." Prejudice is slow to hear, and bigotry is impatient of opposition, but hypocrisy is quite hopeless of reformation. Honest error, even of the worst description, may be corrected, but, insincere profession becomes more inveterate with years. "Can the Leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin? Then may they who have been used to do evil, learn to do well." I therefore expect nothing from the blustering, bitter, persecuting partisans of orthodoxy; but, I do expect much from thousands of sincere and amiable men, who, although they may entertain an erroneous faith, are not deficient in a Christian spirit. To such, I now address myself, in perfect good-will; and not without a strong hope, that I may be able to remove some prejudices, and to correct some mistakes.

Although, brethren, it is my great happiness to believe, that religious error is not, in itself, damnable, I am, nevertheless, fully convinced, that, in many cases it is highly culpable, and in all cases dangerous. This position may be illustrated by a very simple analogy. A man may, through ignorance, eat a poisonous fruit, or drink a deleterious draught; and the consequent penalty of nature is, that he shall die. Now, his act is culpable, if he has neglected the use of reasonable means of information and precaution placed within his reach, but entirely free from blame, if he possessed no adequate means of information; yet, in either case, the danger is the same. So, in the all-important concern of religion, error may be the result of a wilful, obstinate neglect of the means of grace and knowledge, and, in such case, it is decidedly criminal; or, it may originate in a defective education, a weakness of intellect, or many other circumstances over which a man possesses no control, and, in this case, it is perfectly innocent: nevertheless, in both instances, the individual who errs is equally liable to go astray, and to be involved in disastrous consequences. I do not say, that in relation to futurity, the consequences will be the same; but, undoubtedly with regard to this world,

there can be no distinction. Now, my brethren, let us apply this simple principle. You may be in great and dangerous error, upon certain important points of religious doctrine; and, if you be, it is a subject of no ordinary interest for you to know, whether or not, you have diligently employed all the means of ascertaining the truth, which God has graciously placed within your reach. Remember, error, in itself, is always dangerous; and avoidable error is always criminal.

But, I will go farther, and suppose that you entertain opinions in perfect accordance with Gospel Truth; and, that as such, they must necessarily be beneficial. Now, even in this case, you may have no certainty of the Divine approbation; for, as there is an unavoidable error which may involve us in dangers, without crime, so there may be an accidental perception of the truth, which may contribute to our advantage, without virtue. I wish therefore to impress it deeply upon your minds—that, the diligent employment of your faculties and the means of grace which God has given you, is equally necessary to render error innocent, and truth virtuous.

Taught, as I fear the great majority of you have been, to take up your opinions on trust, to receive the creeds of Churches as the Oracles of Heaven, and the dicta of your ministers as the unerring exposition of the Divine Law, you may, perhaps, be astonished at the principles which I have just been advancing. Examine them, however, by the reason which God has given you—measure them by the standard of his word—and you will find them to be irrefutable. If your religious opinions be not deduced from the Bible by the due exercise of your reasoning faculties—if they be merely the blind, unthinking offspring of parental authority or the circumstances in which you have been placed—believe me, brethren, you are not “fully persuaded in your *own minds*” as the Apostle enjoins you to be—your sentiments are nothing but ignorant prejudices—your feelings are only superstitious impressions—and your Bibles are of no more use to *you*, than the Koran of Mahomet, or the Vedant of the Hindoos. What then, brethren, must you think of those who denounce “carnal reason as the enemy of faith”, who howl forth anathemas against “rational preaching”, as if it were worse than blasphemy—who enjoin you to believe without investigation—and

who require you to appreciate the gift of God, without the exercise of your understandings. This I freely admit, is an excellent way to render you "dutiful sons of the Church"—to prepare you for the domination of the clergy—and to make you the blind and ready instruments of persecution: but, it is not the way to make you christians. The power of the Gospel is its sublime, yet simple rationality: it speaks to the understanding, and through the understanding to the affections: it addresses us "as wise men," and commands us "to judge what it saith." Reason is beautifully denominated "the candle of the Lord:" it is indeed the sacred light which enables us to read the glorious Volumes of Nature and Revelation. Yet, you are exhorted to extinguish this light of Heaven, and grope amidst the darkness of human ignorance, in order, the better to discover the truth of God! It would not be more absurd to require you to pluck out your eyes, that you might more distinctly perceive the glories of creation; and it would be far less injurious and criminal. To insinuate that Revelation will not bear the test of reason, and to forbid the investigation of its principles as tending to produce infidelity, is a daring insult to the wisdom that dictated the Volume of Life! What! Is reason the boast and the glory of man, by which he is specially allied to angels—is he privileged to employ it even in the meanest cares and drudgeries of the world—and shall he be denied its exercise "in the grand concerns of an eternal scene!" Believe me, brethren, no honest man, no honest church, can seriously maintain, that the freest and fullest use of reason, "in searching the Scriptures," will lead to infidelity. It will do the very reverse. But, it will as surely lead to the rejection of the Creeds and Articles of Churches, "as the sparks fly upwards." Hence, verily, all the outcry against reason, and all the prevalent horrors of "rational preaching!" This fact is beginning to be understood; and although mysticism and ignorance may be convenient for churches, they are pre-eminently detrimental to "pure and undefiled religion."

I am well aware, brethren, of the means which are used, to induce you to acquiesce in antiquated prejudices and errors as the doctrines of the Gospel. You are taught to look with a mysterious veneration upon the

faith of your forefathers, as Catholic devotees estimate the rotten relicks of their saints ; and to consider that all is well, whilst you bear the cabalistic name of "orthodox," and tread in "the good old way by which your fathers went to Heaven." This sanctifying of ancient error has been the great weapon of the clergy, of all religions, and in all times. The Heathens employed it against the Jews, the Jews against the Christians, the Catholics against the Protestants, and the older Protestant sects against all their younger brethren. Is it not your duty to inquire into the validity of a plea which is so often urged, and so generally admitted? May I ask you, then, is the antiquity of any opinion, a certain criterion of its soundness? If it be, the more ancient the better; and on this principle Paganism is far superior to Christianity, and Catholicity to Protestantism! But do any of you believe this? Or, is there any other subject, save that of religion, on which you entertain so high a respect for the views of your ancestors? I suspect you would not be very anxious to return to "the good old way" of agriculture, manufactures, or commerce; and that you would scarcely prefer the venerable vehicles upon which your progenitors travelled at the rate of two miles an hour, to the Rail-Road coaches in which their descendants now travel at the rate of *thirty*. On the contrary, it is your boast, that in arts and sciences, in literature and philosophy, in laws and government—in short, in every thing connected with the rational interests and enjoyments of life, you are unconceivably superior to your ancestors of preceding centuries. Indeed, with the accumulation of knowledge, and all your opportunities of improvement, it would be extremely disgraceful to you, if you were not their superiors. Is it probable, then, is it possible, that in *religion alone*, they were miracles of wisdom? Were their means of acquiring accurate views of Divine Truth, greater than those which they enjoyed in other respects? No: they were the very reverse. I do not ask you to go so far back as the gloomy ages of Romish darkness; I come, at once, to the lauded times of the Reformation, when those Protestant doctrines, now called Orthodox, were first established. Were the mass of the people then prepared by previous education, and by the rejection of

prejudices and superstitions, for the serious and successful investigation of the great principles of Divine Truth? And, did they possess the Sacred Records, as the ground-work of inquiry? On the contrary, it is a notorious fact, that some of the clergy, and the great majority of the Laity, *could not even read*; and, that, for many years, not one individual, perhaps, in one thousand, possessed a Bible! The Reformation made its way by oral teaching, and by the contagion of popular excitement; and, yet, you are taught to look upon opinions which sprung up under such circumstances, as the genuine and fundamental doctrines of Revelation! The simple truth is, my brethren, our reforming ancestors did much, considering their means and circumstances; but, they were encompassed with difficulties, and we cannot be surprised, that so many of the principles of Popery clung to the churches of the Reformation, and that several new errors supplied the room of others which had been abandoned. It would have been miraculous had they not fallen into serious mistakes; and it is truly wonderful, that any men can have the hardihood to hold up the opinions of persons so situated, as the perfection of Christian doctrine, and the guide of all modern believers!

Whatever you may be told, brethren, by those who wish to keep you in leading-strings, and who, therefore are endeavouring to envelope you in the solemn and mysterious gloom of past ages, you have, in reality, no more concern in the religious tenets of your ancestors, than your departed progenitors have in yours. The great question with all sincere Christians ought to be—not, what their *forefathers believed*, but what the *Scriptures inculcate*. Your remote progenitors were Heathens, your Christian ancestors, not long ago, were Catholics, and your more immediate predecessors were Calvinistic Protestants. Now, I ask you, as men of plain common sense, is there a single argument deducible from ancestral wisdom, and the propriety of “walking in the good old way,” that would not equally have applied to the perpetuation of the errors of Paganism or Catholicity? It is of no avail to allege, that *your* ancestors discovered the *whole truth*, and that you ought therefore to adopt their tenets: the same allegation has been put forth, in all ages, with equal

claims: and, if you hold your religious opinions, merely because they were promulgated by certain ancient divines, set forth in certain venerable books of human composition, erected into standards of faith by certain churches, and received without inquiry by certain aged persons that have gone before you, your religion rests upon the authority of man, and not upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Your sentiments, in the abstract, may be right or wrong, but, in point of fact, your faith, however orthodox in name, is nothing more than sheer prejudice, in reality.

Now, brethren, I put it to you in earnest seriousness and good-will, is this *Christian* faith? Is it founded upon genuine *Gospel* principles? Does the Lord Jesus demand of you a blind, irrational assent to his doctrines? Do his inspired Apostles require such unreasoning, implicit acquiescence even in *their* teachings, as your orthodox churches claim for their self-contradictory, human compositions? No: the Great Head of the Church saith unto you, "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and *these* are they which testify of *me*." "Let every man," saith the Apostle, "be fully persuaded in his *own* mind: I speak as unto wise men, *judge* ye what I say: these were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." Yet, in direct contravention of those unequivocal dictates of the divine word, you are exhorted, every day, to abide by *the religion of your ancestors*, without any inquiry whether it be *also the religion of the Bible!*

Now, are there not two things which must strike you as rather wonderful, in all this? In the first place—if the opinions, usually called orthodox, be *indeed* accordant with the Word of God, how can their advocates be afraid of their being brought, by enlightened reason, to be measured by the perfect standard of "the law and the testimony?" Surely, the *genuine* wisdom of God must appear the more lovely and attractive, in proportion to the light which is made to shine upon it; and those doctrines which are derived *from* the Scripture cannot dread being brought to the test of Scripture. In the second place—is it not very strange, that the identical individuals who require of *you* to sacrifice the

right of private judgment on the altar of the church, and to receive with undoubting acquiescence, the tenets of your ancestors as the true doctrines of the Bible, at the very same time pour forth torrents of abuse upon Roman Catholics, *because* they do *not* reject the authority of the church, think for themselves, and desert the faith of their fathers! Church power, venerable creeds, and ancestral wisdom, are all admirable when employed to perpetuate the comfortable dogmas of *Calvinism*; but, they are utterly hateful, when enlisted in the cause of *Catholicity*! We read of an uninstructed savage, who spurned the man that “blew hot and cold out of the same mouth;” and what must you think of those individuals, who, at the same moment, advocate two opposite principles? You are shrewd men, and well qualified to draw sound conclusions from plain premises, and I confidently leave this matter with yourselves.

Let me, however, my brethren, endeavour to impress it deeply upon your minds, that you are awfully responsible for the diligent exercise of those rational faculties which God has bestowed upon you, in the faithful investigation of the all-important principles of that religion which He has mercifully given you, as your guide to earthly holiness and eternal peace. Other inquiries, you may neglect without criminality—other knowledge you may want without serious loss—but, if you remain wilfully ignorant of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” because you are too indolent to inquire, or too much prejudiced to admit the force of evidence, I tell you plainly, that you are not merely in a most deplorable, but likewise in a most dangerous condition. Put the question seriously to your own hearts—have you, verily, and indeed, with all prayerfulness and humility, sought for the truth, “as for hidden treasure—the jewel of great price?” Is it not a melancholy fact, that most of you have not sought for it at all, where *alone* it is to be found, in the Word of Life—and that you are Christians, rather from the associations and prejudices of sects, than from a thorough acquaintance with the principles of the Gospel? And, even with regard to the few of you who have read and considered—have you not so read and thought, more that you might be enabled to support your party and your pre-conceived opi-

nions, than to ascertain the genuine teachings of the *Spirit*, in all their enlargement, and holiness, and truth? Are you, then, whilst you remain in this condition, qualified to say, that your opinions are really founded upon the word of God—and that you can trust in them as “a sure anchor of hope to your souls,” amidst all the tempests and trials of the world?

But, brethren, if you be thus unable to say, that your own opinions are founded upon rational and Scriptural principles, you are still more incompetent to pronounce judgment with regard to the tenets of others. Independently of the delusions and mistakes necessarily attendant upon vanity, prejudice, and want of information, you have been accustomed to view the doctrines entertained by many of your fellow Christians, through the distorting medium of the foulest misrepresentations. You have heard your Unitarian brethren, in particular, denied even the Christian name, and denounced as rejecters of Revelation, “deniers of the Lord that bought them,” enemies of God and truth, destroyers of souls, and instruments of Satan! All these unholy calumnies, and many others equally baseless, you have heard from pulpits, and read in pamphlets, and listened to in whisperings and conversation. It is not wonderful therefore, that so many of you have been led to look upon them with horror, and to consider them as “vessels of wrath fitted for destruction”—proper objects of temporal persecution and eternal misery. Although they have jeopardized every worldly interest, and passed through “the fiery furnace” of social and ecclesiastical persecution, “for the sake of Christ and a good conscience,” you have heard them reviled as wretches who “would snatch the crown of glory from the head of their Redeemer!” I freely pardon, therefore, the harsh judgments which many of you have pronounced, and the oppressive measures of which you have been so often made the instruments and abettors. “I wot that through ignorance ye have done it”—ignorance of the Divine Records in their enlarged bearings—ignorance of the foundation, or rather *baselessness*, of your own opinions—ignorance of the *real sentiments* entertained by those whom you condemn—and ignorance of the true principles of a Scriptural church.

You owe it, therefore, equally to yourselves and

your fellow Christians, to the cause of truth and charity, candidly to “search the Scriptures” as the fountain of all genuine religious knowledge, and to embrace all other means of information that may be placed within your reach. So long as you are ignorant of any thing, which you have it in your *power* to know, you are highly culpable; and if, through such ignorance, you continue to hold an erroneous faith, to cherish uncharitable feelings, and to encourage unchristian oppressions, you are not only highly culpable, but extremely criminal.

In some future communications, I shall endeavour to aid you in the attainment of more correct views, both with regard to Church Government and Doctrine; and, in the mean time, believe me to be, brethren, your faithful servant,

CHRISTIANUS.

THE SENTIMENTS OF A LADY ON FAITH, DUTY, AND CHARITY.

I am a christian, a sincere christian, according to the doctrine of the gospel. I am a christian, not as a disciple of priests, but as a disciple of Jesus Christ. My great Master refined but little on doctrinal texts, [but insisted strongly on moral obligations. He prescribed fewer articles of faith than of good works. He commanded us to *believe* only so much as is necessary to make us *good*. When he superseded the law and the prophets, it was more by acts of virtue than articles of belief. And he hath told me, as well in his own words, as by those of his apostles, “That whoso loveth his brother hath fulfilled the law.”

With regard to myself, being firmly convinced of the essential truths of Christianity, which are the foundation of all good morality, I endeavour to nourish my heart with the spirit of the Gospel, without perplexing my head about what appears in it dark and obscure; and being as fully persuaded, that whosoever loveth God above all things, and his neighbour as himself, is a true disciple of Christ. I strive to prove myself such, by laying aside all those doctrinal subtleties, those important trifles, with which the Pharisees so perplex our duty and confound our belief; placing with St. Paul, even faith itself below charity.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

THIRD LETTER TO A LITERARY LADY.

DEAR MADAM,—Agreeably to your desire, I have already given you my thoughts on the nature and uniformity of Conscience; and now, according to my promise, I send you some observations on other points connected with that branch of our constitution. I am aware that they may differ from opinions that you have imbibed; nor will I argue with any one, and least of all with you on such questions. I may have sometimes, been seduced into controversy; but my inclination is to explain my sentiments clearly, and calmly leave it to others to canvass their truth, and adopt them or not, as they see cause. In this I wish to follow my prototype. He was naturally inclined to treat every subject with urbanity, good-humour, and pleasantry; but he was once drawn into an argument on free will, with Luther. He set on Melancthon to confute Erasmus; but Erasmus converted Melancthon. I make every one welcome to his own opinion. “Do all things without disputings” is my golden rule. I am, therefore, like a certain politician, fair game. Any one may challenge me with impunity, for I wont fight. I am not, however, afraid of offending you; but I see, you are apprehensive, that my first Letter may have hurt the feelings, and may affect the interest of Mr. Ferrie. Now in this, you must be misled by your natural delicacy and sensibility, and anxiety for a friend. If however, he saw that paper, he must have been struck with the cautious and complimentary style that prevailed throughout it, and a reluctance to refer to him or his lectures expressly: so that, I have no apprehensions on that score. Such extreme sensitiveness would not be becoming in a moral philosopher. I am sure, I should be sorry to give him any just cause of offence; and if he took any, he is not so great a philosopher as I took him for. In regard to his professions and pecuniary interest, I was equally on my guard. I carefully avoided every thing, that might lend a handle to his enemies; at least I

studied to do so, not knowing into what hands the letter might fall. As to any pecuniary considerations, they were still less worthy of his attention or mine. I conceive that professional and literary men are set as watch-men, to give warning of the inroad of errors, or those which they consider as such, whatever their authors and abettors may think of them. It is especially incumbent on them to protect the female sex from sceptical notions, in a society heretofore peculiarly exempt from such dangerous refinements. It is beneath a scholar to suffer such diversities of opinion on moral questions to interrupt the cordiality of friendly intercourse. If you allude to a diminution of next year's class, I hope, there will be no cause for such apprehensions, provided the course be more edifying and appropriate.

I am also inclined to take some credit for the respect with which I spoke of the ladies; and now I cannot but admire the facility, with which many of your associates passed from phrenology to mental physiology; but I wonder that some can adhere to two contradictory systems at the same time; the one storing the brain or the scull with a crowd of native independent powers, and the other expelling from it all instinctive principles, and grafting all the intellectual branches on one stock. Observe, for instance, with what perspicuity Mr. Mill illustrates the identity of memory and consciousness.

"Now in this last mentioned part of the compound, it is *easy to perceive* two important elements, the idea of my present self, the remembering self, and the idea of my past self, the remembered or witnessing self. These two ideas stand at the two ends of a portion of my being; that is of a certain series of my states of consciousness. That series consists of the successive states of my consciousness, intervening between the moment of perception, or the past moment, and the moment of memory, or the present moment." Mill's Analysis, I. p. 244.

As this is *so easy to perceive*, I am ashamed to acknowledge any difficulty in comprehending it.

But to proceed with our subject. We are so constituted by nature, as to feel an obligation to do justice, and to love mercy, without reasoning. No man ever doubted whether it was his duty to be kind or cruel.

Every man knows, that he ought to be honest and sincere. It is absurd to suppose, that any one should think himself morally bound to be treacherous and ungrateful. We can give no reason for this, except that it pleased God to form us so. Every man feels compunction and remorse, when he offends against this principle. This however, is not such a feeling as sight or touch. We may conceive our eyes to be so constructed that what now appears blue might give us the idea of red; and if this were uniformly and universally the case, no inconvenience would follow; but we feel a conviction that virtue never could be blameable, nor vice praise-worthy. We have the same feeling about them, that we have with respect to those truths, that we call necessary, such as that two and two must make four. We see an absurdity in supposing, that they could ever make five. In like manner, we cannot doubt, that benevolence must always be preferable to cruelty. Though we refer our constitution, in the first place, to the will of our Maker, yet we are persuaded, that it could not in this respect be other than it is. This is a matter of feeling: and if we were to reason upon it, we should find that it must be so. It is plain, in the first place, that virtue must be pleasing to God himself; for he could never make us approve and love what he despise and hated; for this would be to make us despised and hate himself. In the next place, we are sure, that good and evil are essentially, and unchangeably different; for if they were matters of indifference, it would be incompatible with the goodness and justice of God, to punish or reward for things indifferent in themselves, or for qualities that were continually changing their nature.

Hence it appears that Conscience is the grand regulating principle of human life, and that the soundness of this principle is a matter of primary importance: I say soundness, for though upon fundamental points, it may be said to be infallible, it is liable to error on particular questions. In order to preserve ourselves from being misled or going astray, we should therefore, after the example of St. Paul, "always exercise ourselves in keeping a pure conscience both towards God and man," and "keep our hearts with all diligence, knowing that out of them come the issues of life." This watchful-

ness may not, however, be always sufficient. It may be warped by such powerful seductions, that we must look to some other guide and authority. The most obvious rule is to consult the dispassionate judgment of other men, who are not subject to a similar bias ; for as we might trust to our own consciences, if not corrupted, so may we confide in theirs, if they be free from bias. This information we may generally obtain from our own observation of the conduct of our neighbours ; and more particularly from expressly consulting our friends. So that the nature of virtue and vice is immutable : they are always objects of approbation and aversion with God ; and he has so formed us, that as long as we attend to Conscience, we must feel and think so too. These truths are the foundation of all morality and religion ; and without them we should be incapable of either.

This internal sense and conviction is the criterion or test, by which we judge of what is right or wrong. It was our only rule, before the will of God was revealed. The approbation or compunction of Conscience is also the only *motive* to Virtue, to mankind, before they acquire a sense of religion, and of the will of a superior Being. So that particular virtues are such principles of action as give pleasure to our moral feelings ; and the merit of an individual consists in complying with the dictates of his own conscience.

Under the gospel dispensation we enjoy many additional advantages. We learn purer and nobler sentiments of God, and consequently of his will. We acquire also higher ideas of man and his destination, and consequently of his duties and the degree of moral excellence to which he should aspire. We are accordingly instructed in a more delicate line of morals than we could attain to by the light of nature. The law of the Lord not only enlighteneth the eyes, but improves the heart ; it not only makes the simple wise, but converts the soul ; and the fear of the Lord, and of his righteous judgment, preserves it from relapsing into sin and folly. The hope of immortality and the fear of eternal perdition, are the two anchors, which keep the soul steadfast and immoveable, secure from being insensibly drawn away by a smooth and deceitful current ; or tossed to and fro by tempests, and wrecked on shoals and quicksands, or dashed against those rocks which make shipwreck of Faith and Conscience.

Conscience may be considered as an internal sense, or a moral judge. By Shaftsbury and Hutcheson it is denominated the moral sense ; an appropriate and innocent expression, at which some have cavilled, as if it implied, that virtue and vice were subjects only of feeling. But this objection, I think, has no force, when we reflect, that right and wrong are eternal and immutable, and that Conscience is the faculty by which we perceive and feel the distinction between them.

As a sense, it communicates a particular class of ideas, namely those of the moral kind. Those animals, which are destitute of this power, are incapable not only of relishing and practising virtue, but also of knowing what it means ; not only of shunning or detesting vice, but even of having any such idea. Without it we might pursue a certain line of conduct as conducing to our happiness, and avoid another which we knew would occasion misery, and we might call the one good and the other bad : we might find an advantage in serving and befriending our neighbours, and a heavy loss attending their resentment or dislike, and therefore prefer that line of conduct which agreed with their opinion : we might perceive, that one proposition was true and another false, and feel the superiority of truth ;—but without the instinctive intimations of Conscience, we could never see the difference between actions as morally right and morally wrong. In this respect it resembles the sight, hearing, smelling, taste, or touch ; for by each of these senses we receive ideas of a peculiar kind, which could not affect the mind, if the organs of these senses were deranged.

Another particular in which Conscience resembles a sense, is that the perception of moral ideas is attended with sensation or sentiment. Different odours, flavours and colours, are not only perceived, but felt, or perceived with pleasure or pain. In like manner, moral ideas, such as gratitude, humanity, treachery, or cruelty, excite agreeable or painful sensations. The objects of the external or internal senses are seldom attended to, with perfect indifference. As our bodily sensations are calculated, not merely to give pleasure and pain, but to stimulate us in our pursuit of what is conducive to health or to some other valuable end ; so that sentiments excited by virtuous and vicious actions, are incentives to the practice of virtue, and dissuasives from vice.

A third peculiarity which entitles this faculty to the name of a sense is, that our perception and judgment of moral qualities is not voluntary. The eye may be opened and shut at pleasure; the ear may be closed, and the other organs stopped or vitiated, so as not to receive impressions: but if they be in a proper state, we cannot avoid seeing colours, hearing sounds, tasting flavours, or smelling odours that are presented to them. In like manner, we may refuse to view or to listen to a tragedy or history; but if present, and attentive, we cannot avoid receiving the impressions which such representations or narratives are calculated to make. We cannot at will receive pleasure from base and cruel, or pain from noble and benevolent actions.

The moral sense also like the rest is susceptible of improvement. The eye may be so habituated to the examination of certain objects, as to discover in them a variety of qualities, which were formerly imperceptible. as in paintings, and curious works of various other kinds. The accuracy and delicacy attained by the ear, and the exquisite pleasure arising from music, are sufficiently well known: we are also well acquainted with the wonderful nicety of feeling and touch to which the blind attain. In like manner our moral feelings may be cultivated to a surprising degree of excellence by exercise, and a proper selection of objects: and our pleasure may be improved in the same proportion. We may acquire as delicate a power of discrimination in judging of moral as of natural qualities: and the pleasure arising from excellence and the disgust excited by depravity may be increased in the one as much as in the other. The cultivation of this moral taste may, like that of others, be carried to an excess, and a degree of fastidiousness that is inconsistent with comfort, and esteem or affection for our brethren, but under wise direction, it is one of our most valuable acquirements.

On the whole, the principal difference between conscience and the bodily senses is, in the nature of the ideas communicated, and in the conscience having no occasion for an external organ. It is an internal sense, and is conversant with moral and intellectual objects, or forms moral conclusions upon the ideas conveyed by the senses into the mind from the corporeal world. As every animal has a peculiar instinct which prompts it to

promote its highest interest : so conscience is the peculiar instinct of man as a moral creature, and prompts him to promote his most durable interest by the practice of virtue, and the improvement of his moral powers.

I am now to make a few remarks upon conscience in its judicial and censorial office.

The first reflection that presents itself in this view of the subject is, that there is a wide difference between the judgment formed by conscience, and that of our intellectual powers. It may not be easy to point out wherein this difference consists, but every man feels it. The judgment formed by conscience is attended with a kind of feeling, with which opinions deduced by reason are never accompanied. We take a deeper interest in the one than in the other. The shape and properties of a triangle or a square are contemplated with a degree of indifference, with which we can never reflect upon an act of oppression, or of generosity. The character of Archimedes as a mathematician, is viewed with very different emotions from those excited by his conduct as a patriot. The ecstatic exclamation of Pythagoras, when he discovered a mathematical problem, gives no such pleasure as that of Elisha to the good Shunamite, "take up thy son." There is an essential difference between truth and virtue, falsehood and vice, between the sensations excited by a beautiful building and propriety of conduct ; between a lofty or romantic mountain, and an heroic action. Our judgment concerning moral conduct is always accompanied with moral approbation, or disapprobation, and with a sensation of sympathy or aversion. We abhor a breach of duty, a mean abuse of cunning, or a tyrannical exertion of power : but it would be ridiculous to feel any abhorrence or detestation of an ill proportioned or incommodious dwelling, a stupid poem, or an inconclusive argument. It therefore appears to me, to be very erroneous to confound conscience and reason. They are distinct faculties, attended by different sensations, and occupied with different objects.

My second observation on conscience as a judge is, that we cannot form such judgment of our own actions, or those of others, as we please. Let a particular line of conduct be ever so conducive to our worldly interest, or our sensual gratification, we have it not in our power

to esteem it honourable, if it be really base. The grounds upon which conscience forms her judgments are totally independent of ourselves. It is only by an artful system of self-delusion, that we reconcile ourselves to any unworthy transaction. We must carefully exclude the truth; we must take pains to embellish falsehood: we must persuade ourselves by such means, that in some one point of view the action accords with the judgment of conscience before we can approve it, or contemplate it without pain and reproach.

It is also a very striking remark, that there is within us a principle over which we have no direction or control; but which on the contrary is calculated and empowered to direct us—to regulate the exercise of our other faculties—to control our various propensities, and even to resist and counteract our most vehement desires. That there is a judge within our breasts, whose sentence we must at all times respect; and which we can never oppose with impunity, a kind of superior self, is a reflection very strange in itself, and fruitful of very edifying considerations.

A few of these and other perfections resulting from the view I have taken of this subject will compose a suitable conclusion of this letter.

The existence of God, of an intelligent Being, separate from, and superior to ourselves, might almost be demonstrated from the nature of conscience, without calling in the aid of any other arguments. To suppose that even the vital and animal powers of man should be the result of accident, or a series of unintelligent causes and effects is in itself sufficiently absurd. But how much is the absurdity of such a supposition aggravated by ascribing the moral and independent principle of conscience to the same inanimate, unintelligent, and indeed unintelligible causes!

If the existence of the Deity may be elucidated by the observations I have made, much greater light will be thrown by them upon his moral character. The nature of conscience evinces to demonstration, that the Creator of man is a moral being. That a God who made no distinction between virtue and vice, or that preferred vice to virtue, would not inspire his creatures with such a faculty and such feelings is in itself so clear, that I despair of rendering it more evident. As the

pleasure we feel on complying with the dictates of conscience, is a proof that God approves of these dictates; so is the remorse with which we are consumed when we violate them, a demonstration of his abhorrence of vice.

Further, from a due cultivation of this moral instinct, and an impartial attention to its unbiassed intimations, we may safely judge of the will of God; and by a careful comparison of these intimations with the instructions of Christ we shall receive a strong confirmation both of their truth, and of his pretensions. "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" It is thus that the Gentiles are acknowledged by Paul to have been a divine law to themselves, having the will of God written in their hearts, their consciences bearing them witness, and their thoughts mutually accusing and excusing one another.

As from the operations of conscience we may be confirmed in our belief of the existence, moral attributes and will of God, so may we be satisfied of his providence, of which conscience is probably an active instrument: and from the painful sensations which this Divine Monitor inflicts, we may be assured, that God may, does, and will execute judgment upon those, who harden their hearts, and sear their consciences as with a hot iron, And that this exercise of criminal justice will not be confined to this life is notorious, not only from the imperfect distribution of temporal goods, but from the facility with which the worst men often elude the chastisement of conscience itself. Conscience "is the Divinity that stirs within us, and points out an eternity to man."

If conscience be the peculiar instinct of human nature, pointing out its highest excellence and interest, an implicit acquiescence in the dictates of conscience must be conformable to the truest self-love: if it be the medium, through which the Divine will is communicated to man, our conformity to it must be our highest and most important duty; and it should be our study to preserve this upright judge from deception. We should check every impetuous passion, every sophistical affection that might impose upon its integrity. And when certain that our conscience has been well informed, we should comply with its decisions as with the voice of God himself. Your's respectfully,

ERASMUS.

UNITARIANISM, A RELIGION FOR THE BED
DEATH.

(BY A LADY.)

ONE of the most afflicting charges against Unitarianism is, that, "it is not a religion to *die* by." From personal experience, I would solemnly enter my protest against this unjust sentence. In health, I had a thrilling dread of death, and its mortal agony. Often in bright and airy moments, a sudden thought of the cold grave has darted through my mind, and touched the flowers of life with a withering chill. I was seized with a severe illness. I saw the countenances of my friends grow sadder and sadder: my little ones were sent away, or taught to tread noiselessly around my bed: the only stranger permitted to break on the stillness of my chamber was one, who sometimes brings relief, but always alarm—an additional physician. To what opening did I then look for strength and comfort? What ray shone, and shone through the gloom of sickness and pain, and grew brighter as I gazed, and lent a radiance to the dark curtain which seemed rising between me and eternity? It was Unitarian Christianity. I leaned my whole soul on the mercy of God as declared in Christ Jesus. I felt how beautiful was the paternal character of the Deity. I felt that he would "forgive my sins, and heal my diseases." For so I had "learned of Christ."

What became then, in my imagination, of the pang of death? It would be, I said, a mere transition to joy and glory. But how could I sustain the wrench of earthly affection, the severing of those tight, fond clasps, that had for years been winding about the heart of a wife and mother? I scarcely give a thought to those dear connexions now, except for eternity. I can do so *little* for them, and God so *much*, I give them up to him. May they live and may I die so religiously that our meeting shall be as God's children!

Many were the bright pictures of future joy, indefinite, but lovely, which I drew of God's goodness. An angry God! I could not think of such a Being! He had never shown anger to me, but I had heard the

voice of his love calling to me from infancy in the fair works of nature, in the beatings of a heart full of hope, and in the revelations of Jesus.

In childhood, I had felt a pure joy in gazing on the blue sky, in hearing the rustling leaves, in tracing the motion of a rivulet, in baring my face to the fresh wind, and breathing strongly new existence. Could I fancy God was angry? But the tempest rose, the stream was ruffled, the snow-drift came. Was he angry then? An angry God would not have given me so sweet a shelter as home afforded, with its bright hearth, and quiet smiles.

In childhood, too, I had enjoyed a mother's fondness, and I was allowed to fall asleep nightly on her knee. God gave her to me in love. She died. Did I think he was angry, when I saw her rigid, and cold, not noticing even me? Was he angry when he allowed them to lay her in her narrow bed, and shut out her youngest born? No—I flew to other friends, and though the petted child had no longer such soft indulgence, her errors were corrected, and she learned to know her own heart. Often have I felt since, that God then showed his love to me.

I grew older, and sinned. Was he angry then? I know not; but I think a pitying God was present to my mind, when in the agony, which early sin first feels, I fell on my knees and repented. When the sensibility of youth was departing, I again, and often strayed from Him. Did I find him angry, when I opened his holy word as a sinner? I found entreaty, love, promises of pardon; but little did I see of that feeling, which man calls anger. And when the gloomy apparatus of death seemed arranging itself about me, and fever scorched, and pain subdued me, was God angry? Least of all, then. I felt that Jesus was preparing a place for me in one of his Father's many mansions, and I tried to put on the garments of a happy traveller, to fit me for the journey.

One thing pressed on my mind. I waited some days for a decisive symptom of dissolution to disclose it. I intended to have requested one or two persons, who had spoken, written, and preached with severity against the doctrine of the simple unity of God, and particularly against its supporters, to be sent for to visit me.

I wished to state to them my religious impressions, and my joyful hope of Heaven. I wished to tell them, that this hope was the result of years of thought and practice, founded on Unitarian principles, and that no merely sudden enthusiasm placed me on that height, where the fear of death was lost "in the hope of glory." I wished to convince them, that they had deceived themselves, and I proposed to request them publicly to retract the declaration, that Unitarianism was not a religion to die by.

These days of solemn expectation slowly passed away. My burning forehead grew cooler under the hand of love, and I felt the soft strings of reviving existence pulling at my heart.

Since that period, a serene thought of death, and a readiness to depart and be with Christ, convinces me that the Spirit of God, not in anger, but in happy trust, has settled on my soul. And if such be the result, as I sincerely believe it be so, of religious feeling founded on Unitarianism, I ask those who slight Christianity, if it be not worth the effort, while the day of health is theirs, to study the character of our Master, and through him of the Deity. Let them not hope that unless they prepare and purify the atmosphere of their souls, the sun of righteousness will shine on them with effectual brightness. They may have pardon, because God is love; but they will not enjoy deep, deep happiness, in meditating on the hope of his presence and nearer likeness.

"THE CONTINENTAL SOCIETY."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—A vapid, puritanical paragraph which appeared in last Wednesday's *Chronicle*, ostensibly emanating from the Editor of that respectable journal, announced a meeting of "*The Continental Society*," yesterday evening, in *May-street Church*, (for, now, we have no *Meeting-Houses* amongst the orthodox,) and several persons went to hear the wonderful details which were promised. I say, the paragraph assumed an *editorial* place and character, although the sensible and liberal journalist never wrote a line of it. The simple truth is, the *editorial flourish* was exactly what the vulgar call "*a white lie*," written, under false pretences, by some orthodox scribe, in order to attract attention. This, I admit, is quite in

character ; as *quackery* of any kind, cannot live without falsehood and *puffing*. Now, sir, with your permission, I shall indulge your readers with a sketch of the proceedings which took place at the meeting ; but, they ought first to know what "*The Continental Society*" is.

You must know, then, sir, that the Reformation begun in Germany, by Martin Luther, did not, in *that* country, as generally in *our own*, stop with the first small departures from Popery. It went on, "shining like the morning light, more and more unto the perfect day," until it enlightened almost every portion of Protestant Europe, and even cast its glorious rays over the land which contained the ashes of the Unitarian martyr, *Servetus*, and the tomb of his orthodox persecutor, *John Calvin*. In short, Protestant Europe, gradually renounced the gloomy errors of Calvinism and the Trinity, and adopted more accurate views of Divine Truth. This was not to be tolerated. What ! could the country of Luther, the glorious reformer, be permitted to believe, that there is *only One God* ? Could Geneva, the *cradle* of Calvinism, be also allowed, in quietness, to become its *grave* ? No ! the opportunity of raising a new Society for the *re-conversion* of Protestant Europe, could not be resisted. Whether it was likely to effect its proposed objects was of no consequence : dismal stories could be told to frighten "*silly women*," and to raise money : certain *black-coated gentlemen*, with long, grave faces, could visit all parts of the country, see the world, be caressed as saints, and *live upon the fat of the earth, at the expense of poor dupes* : and, above all, atrocious and unfounded calumnies could be uttered against *Continental Unitarians*, and dexterously made to bear against Christians in these countries, which no one would have had the audacity to advance where a ready refutation was at hand. Add to all these reasons, the paramount one—frequent opportunities of *display, and pretence, and exhibition* ; and you have "the essence and spirit" of "*The Continental Society*."

Say, not, Sir, that this statement is exaggerated or uncharitable : it is the plain and simple truth. I know the originators, and abettors, and actors, in this scheme, *right well* ! *Madame Krudener*, a public and superannuated adulteress—the *Reverend Cesar Malan*, her worthy pupil—innocent Robert Haldane, of Edinburgh—Mr. Henry Drummond, saint, dupe, and banker, of London—Henry Cooke, and John Edgar, of Belfast—I know you all ! The *good lady*, it is true, has gone to her rest ; though her name and *actions* still survive ! But, even if the actors in this solemn drama were unknown, their *deeds* would speak their *objects*.

I recollect, that about three years ago, the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, (since so celebrated as the bold rebuker of a *reforming king*, though George the Fourth, pure saint ! escaped his virtuous censure,) and the Rev. Robert Trail, (who has since, with excessive filial piety, placed one of his Father's richest sinecure livings upon his own shoulders, being younger and able to bear it *longer*,) appeared in this town, (Belfast,) as advocates of "*The Continental Society*." I witnessed the exhibition. Mr. M'Neile is a fine-looking man, and would be a good actor, had he sufficient command of counte-

nance; but, many persons as well as myself perceived, that he was *then* imperfect in his part: for, whilst he seemed to perform deep *Tragedy* with the one side of his face, there was a leer upon the other, which plainly indicated that he knew he was only acting *Farce*. He, however, told the story of the infidel German writer, (who denied the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ,) much better than my friend Dr. Cooke did last night. Indeed, it is no wonder, that the good *Doctor* did not succeed: the tale is as hackneyed as "the Fable of the Mountain in Labour;" and the absurdity and impiety of it were fully exposed in "The Monthly Repository," (a Unitarian publication,) nearly *twenty years ago*; although these *evangelical* Christians impudently bring it forward at almost *every* meeting, as a slur upon that very Unitarianism which *first* rejected, and still abhors it! Every one saw at that meeting, that Mr. M'Neile only used "The Continental Society," as a stalking-horse, from behind which he could the more forcibly shoot his poisoned arrows against Unitarian Christianity. After uttering much trash, with pompous diction and theatrical gesture, he poured forth a violent philippic against the Rev. Dr. Drummond, a truly Christian minister, who, in all the essentials of manhood, sound intellect, extensive erudition, sterling honesty, and moral purity, is as much superior to Hugh M'Neile, as light is to darkness! 'I recollect nothing that was delivered by the *Pensioner's* son, Robert Trail, except a ridiculous story which no-body believed—concerning himself, or some one else, who found 30,000 Protestants, in the South or East of France, with only *one* Bible amongst them; and a true statement, that, in the valley of the glorious Waldenses, the people were nearly all Unitarians!

The next time, that "The Continental Society" came under my notice was in a report of its annual meeting, held at Exter Hall, London, on the 18th of May last. On that occasion, the chairman denounced all "who do not bow the knee to an *Incarnate God*!" My friend Dr. Cooke was present, told several tales which he had heard from friends who had travelled on the Continent, almost wept over "the frightful doctrines of neology," and modestly deprecated the overwhelming applause which, he knew, was about to acknowledge his transcendent efforts. Oh! how the good *Doctor* does abhor popular applause! Mr. Henry Drummond, however, still ventured to eulogize him, for "having put to flight the Arian and Socinian hosts in Ireland"—declared, that "they could not too soon adopt the principle, and act upon it, that an Arian or Socinian could, *in no sense whatever*, be called a Christian, (*hear, hear,*) that in point of fact, when the Arian with-held *any* thing from Christ of absolute Godhead, he with-held *all*"—and, that "by a personality in the trinity, an incarnation was possible, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, we might see, know, and *handle*, a *visible God*!" I have read in Scripture, that, "God is the king eternal, immortal, and *invisible*, whom no man *hath seen*, nor indeed *can see*;" but, according to Mr. Drummond, and the Continental Society, whosoever believes this solemn, Bible Truth, "is in no sense whatever to be called a Christian!" Mr. Drummond, was followed by innocent Robert Haldane of Edinburgh, who also bespattered

my friend the Doctor with fulsome praise, as "one faithful minister of Christ, who, in the North of Ireland, had broken up the ungodly confederacy between the ministers of Christ and Satan"—i. e. the Remonstrants: for, the Arians who *remain* in the Synod, are doubtless "Christians," and no "Devils!" These orators were succeeded, in a similar strain of orthodox charity, by the Rev. Nicholas Armstrong, (who subsequently recommended the conversion of the Irish Catholics, by the gentle influence of *starvation*,) and several other evangelical divines and laymen. In fact, from beginning to end, the great object of the meeting evidently was a foul and false attack upon Unitarianism and Unitarians.

I do not, therefore, wonder that my friend, *the Doctor*, longed for a similar meeting in Belfast, where he could repeat his London tales, and abuse, with impunity, his injured brethren in Ulster. But, I do wonder, that the Rev. W. Bland, who is, in the main, a well-meaning, harmless man, allowed himself "to be made a cat's paw," by presiding at their frothy und christian spouting match, yesterday evening. They have used him, on several occasions "to grace their revels;" and I am sorry for it, because he is a respectable minister of the Established Church, and little dreams, that they are only making a tool of him, whilst they really disgrace him by the honour of presidency, in their assemblies. Mr. Bland is too innocent and too good a man to be suspicious; and I am sure, he could not approve of the shocking calumnies which he last night heard uttered against two respectable classes of his fellow Christians, who contribute to his support. If ministers of the Establishment *condescend* to eat bread procured by the labour of Catholic "idolaters," and Unitarian "blasphemers," they might at least, in common decency, avoid those disgusting orgies of swaddling intolerance, where their benefactors are insultingly maligned, misrepresented, and abused. The Rev. A. C. Macartney might be an example to some of the "minor prophets" around him. If he eat bread for which he gives no service, he is not graceless enough to add insult to injury.

Mr. Bland, besides, ought to reflect, that it was a little *awkward* for a true churchman to preside at a meeting where such Billingsgate abuse was heaped upon Popery, as that to which he listened yesterday evening. He knows, right well, that, "the two Churches are only separated by a paper wall;" and that some of the highest authorities in each, perceive no great obstacles to their complete reunion. Their principal forms, ceremonies, creeds, liturgies, and festivals, are the same. In Church government, they are completely identified—save that the Papists have the advantage of an aged and respectable minister, (the Pope,) for the visible head of *their* Church, whilst the Protestant Episcopal Church of these realms is the bond-slave of every king that reigns, and every lay Parliament that happens to legislate in Britain. Mr. Bland also knows, that, if one of Dr. Crolly's Popish curates chose to read his recantation to-morrow, he would, *ipso facto*, without any farther *ordination*, be as much a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, as the worthy curate of St. George's Church! Recollecting, too, the history of the Puritanical canters that brought Charles I to the

block, and overturned both the throne and the church, selfishness should teach him, even if shame were wanting, to shun the association of men who have revived all the irreligious slang and grimace of the days of Oliver Cromwell. They talk of the bigotry and exclusiveness of Popery; but, if all the uncharitable denunciations of the Church of Rome, from the age of Constantine, were concentrated, they could not transcend the virulent and unchristian abuse which was heaped upon Catholicism, by almost every speaker, yesterday evening. So far as I could judge, there were no Catholics present to be insulted; and the only object of the verbose harangues must have been to foster the spirit of the infernal regions, in the breasts of some ignorant Protestants of various denominations.

My business, however, is to review the orations of two celebrated Divines, in those portions where they reviled and misrepresented the sentiments and conduct of Unitarians.

Dr. Cooke, opened the exhibition with a splendid flourish against something which he called *Neology*. This wonderful term operated like a spell upon his audience. Having no knowledge whatever of its meaning, they took it for granted, that it signified something too horrible to bear explanation in plain English!! Whilst they were in this favourable condition, he continued to ring the changes upon the *neology* and *infidelity* which prevailed in Germany, and told a wonderful story of a Neologist Professor, who altogether denied the ascension of Christ. And, when they were sufficiently horrified, he brought the whole to bear upon the grand object of his attack—he told them, that, “*Neology* was a mixture of *Arianism* and *Socinianism*!” If he knew any thing at all of *Neology*, or, as it is commonly called *Rationalism*, in Germany, (which I suspect he did not,) he must have known that it consisted of the infidel speculations of a very few learned men, who denied the inspiration of the Scriptures, and endeavoured to explain away the miracles of Christ, by accounting for them upon natural principles. It never made any progress amongst the mass of the people; and can with no more propriety be charged upon the enlightened Christians of the Continent, than the ravings of the Rev. Robert Taylor can be charged upon the episcopalians of England. Dr. Cooke either *knew* this, or he did *not know* it. If he was ignorant, how did he presume to speak upon the subject at all? If he possessed accurate information, how did he *dare*, wilfully and openly to malign his fellow mortals? As to any connexion between *Unitarianism* in these countries, and German *Rationalism*, he could scarcely be ignorant, that no more exists, than there does of affinity between the brightness of noon-day and the blackness of midnight. I shall not waste words in exposing to scorn, the *Doctor's* contemptible effort to associate Unitarianism with Catholicity, and both with infidelity. Ignorant and bigoted though the great mass of his auditors were, the attempt was too gross to impose even upon *them*. They well knew, that north and south are not more opposed to each other, than Unitarianism and Catholicity; and, that, infidelity has met with its deadliest foes in the ranks of Unitarians! Were he any other man than Henry Cooke, I should call upon him to retract

his base, and baseless assertions : but, "the Leopard cannot change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin." I leave him, therefore, to his own midnight reflections, and turn to my friend, the Rev. John Edgar, Professor of Theology to the Seceding Synod.

This gentleman has, for some time, been actively and laudably engaged in exertions to lessen the crime of intemperance ; and, in these exertions, I sincerely "wished him God speed." Many a time and oft, have I defended him against the sneers and insinuations of those who alleged, that his grand aim was to acquire popularity, to gratify his well-known vanity, to gain admission into a good society, to secure the applause of saintly coteries, to see the world at the public expense, and to satiate, if possible, his inordinate love of talking. When a good motive lies upon the surface, it is uncharitable and unjust to seek below it for unworthy impulses. I never, therefore, joined in the common sarcasms thrown out against Mr. Edgar, although, like all other men, he doubtless has the taint of the world, even in his best actions. But, when I see him inflated with self-importance, forgetting himself because he has received a little ephemeral applause, and coming forward at a public meeting, grossly to calumniate and revile better men than himself, I owe it equally to him and those whom he has injured, to rebuke and correct him, with all plainness and sincerity.

After declaiming for some time, with great violence of gesticulation, about "horrible errors and grievous heresies," he must needs, like all his tribe, relate an anecdote or two—or rather two *facts*. He had been in the south of Ireland, and "in one place desired to obtain a meeting for an object which he had deeply at heart ; but, because it was known that he came from *Belfast*, it was supposed that he was an *Arian*, and he was very coldly received. However, he speedily undeceived them, and soon obtained an excellent meeting. In another place, although it was said he had spoken very well, he was from *Belfast*, and supposed to be an *Arian*, and he spoke to no purpose, until the people were set right." These statements, I take for literal facts, not for "rhetorical artifices," like some others which were played off ; and they are pregnant with instruction. They show us *first*—that such is the detestable spirit excited by the ignorant clamour and gross misrepresentations of modern orthodoxy, that certain bigoted wretches would not listen to a speech on the subject of an important moral duty, because the speaker, was "supposed" to differ from them on some points of religious doctrine ! We learn in the second place—that even where they *did* hear, yea, and highly approve of the sentiments too, they would not be influenced, "because the Orator was supposed to be an *Arian*" ! Verily, this is very good ; and most happily illustrates both the sense and candour of *evangelicism* ! I knew as much before ; but here is the fact, upon *authority*—orthodoxy shuts the eyes, and seals the ears, and perverts the judgment ! Even truth is spurned, when supposed to emanate from heretical lips ; and the perpetuation of crime, would be preferred to the restoration of virtue, through the instrumentality of a Christian Unitarian ! I thank the worthy Professor for his candid statements, and the felicitous illustration which they afford of the beneficial tendencies of Orthodoxy ! One

fact is worth fifty arguments. He spoke too modestly, however, of his own exertions (for he is the very personification of *diffidence*,) when he alleged, that "it was admitted, he spoke *very well*!" What! only, "very well," when delivering the same hackneyed harangue for the hundredth time! Indeed, this is by far too modest!

That the good evangelicals of the South should mistake an Orthodox Professor for an Arian, is only to be accounted for on the ground of their never having seen that heretical Monster. I am very sure, that no person in Ulster could, for one moment, make such a blunder. I never heard the Professor speak upon any subject, for five minutes, that he did not utter something savage or uncharitable, which would at once distinguish him from an Arian. Besides, Arians walk erect, like men—"vultus ad sidera tollunt"—and they cultivate the charities of life—"amoeni sunt inter homines"—they neither fawn nor swagger, as it may serve their turn!

The Professor having escaped from the horrific supposition of Arianism, waxed still more eloquent, and declared "that Arianism and Socinianism are the broad high-road to Infidelity"—and that "the religious Liberals of our own day, are either avowed or secret Infidels." Now this is open and manly: he does not express an *opinion*, but boldly states what he is able to prove if it be a **FACT**; and what, if he cannot prove it, he must admit to be a **FALSEHOOD** of the basest description. It was evident to every one in the meeting that by the terms—"the religious liberals of our own day"—he meant his Unitarian Brethren, in this country, who are vulgarly, though improperly called Arians. His great object throughout appeared to be, to abuse and injure them. To Socinians, he could have had no reference, for he knows that they do not exist in this Island; and if they did, his accusation as against them would be equally groundless.

I now, Professor Edgar, call upon you before the world, to come forth and state whom you mean by "Religious Liberals"—and, if you mean Unitarian Christians, miscalled Arians, I *demand* it of you to *prove* that "they are either avowed or secret Infidels," or to retract the infamous allegation. The matter is too serious to be permitted to rest: you shall not be allowed to shift or equivocate. The direful charge, on your authority, now lies against Ministers of the Gospel, amongst others—against men every way your superiors—men who have made the greatest worldly sacrifices in vindication of the rights of conscience, and in unshaken fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ—men who, were they the villains whom you have had the audacity to represent them to be, would like yourself, at this moment be swelling the ranks, and joining in the malignant clamours of misnamed Orthodoxy. Come out, Sir, with your proofs. If they be "avowed Infidels," you can easily write down their names: if they be "secret Infidels," you can doubtless show how you learned the secret, and state who they are. You are a Professor of Divinity in an Orthodox Church, and you must not be found "halting," Mr. Edgar.

But, Reverend Sir, I have not yet done with you. Your speech, on Thursday evening, was liberal in assertions; and I wish you to prove the truth of that which follows. You publicly stated, that, "In England, men are paid *six-pence* a day for attending Uni-

tarian Chapels' ! This statement, very justly produced a great sensation ; and you brought it forward for the evident purpose of casting odium upon Unitarians and Unitarianism in general. Now, Sir, for aught I know, it may be perfectly true : but, I put it even to *your candour*, is it *very fair* to condemn a religious System, or an entire religious Denomination, because a few individuals may have dishonoured their principles ? There have been sodomites and murderers, drunkards and adulterers, swindlers, and villains of all kinds, even in the high and palmy places of Orthodoxy. What would you Evangelicals think, candid Sir, of Unitarians, were they to adduce these wretches as evidence against yourselves and your creed ? I tell you, however, although your story of the "*six-pence a day*," were it even true, would prove nothing, that I believe it to be an arrant orthodox fabrication. But, if true, you can easily substantiate it. Remember, however, you are not to give the authority of some orthodox libel, miscalled a religious tract or pamphlet : for, on such authority, you could prove any thing—as for instance, the atrocious calumnies against the Unitarians of Geneva. You must give, sir, time and place, names and references, that the matter may be sifted to the bottom.

Perhaps, Mr. Editor, you may think that I have wasted too much of my own time, and of your space, in the exposure of groundless misrepresentations ; but, I can assure you, that amongst well-disposed, ignorant, credulous people, such calumnies do inconceivable mischief. They never imagine, that grave divines, with the odour of sanctity upon their lips, could be guilty of trickery and deceit. Besides, sir, almost all the Societies which have been lately instituted by the orthodox party, seem chiefly designed to afford opportunities of speech-making against Unitarians and Catholics. "The Continental Society," in particular, can have no other aim ; for no man in his senses can believe, that a few speculators and enthusiasts in these countries, shall ever be able to bring Germany, (perhaps the most enlightened country in the world,) under the galling yoke of Trinitarianism and Calvinism. Of all the multifarious schemes for "obtaining money under false pretences," and making idle exhibitions, this is by far the least feasible. I am, sir, yours, &c.

Belfast, August 26, 1831.

A UNITARIAN.

[We publish the preceding letter, out of respect to an esteemed correspondent ; but we think, he has wasted a good deal of indignation upon a very worthless subject. The misrepresentations of orthodoxy are beginning to lose their power : they are too gross to be credited, by any men whose opinions merit consideration. Our friend, besides, will see, that if he were to comment upon all their *wanderings*, he might, in fact, almost reprint their speeches, tracts, and magazines, which are composed of little else. At a meeting of this very "Continental Society" in Dublin, a few weeks ago, in addition to sundry other equally complimentary things, two of the *Reverend* orators talked of "Unitarian Blasphemers," and of "the blasphemy of Unitarians and Arians !" These enormities will work out their own cure.]

EDITORS,

NOTICE OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

"THE PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE of the UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY: A SERMON, delivered in Strand-Street, Meeting-House, Dublin, on Sunday, April 3, on occasion of the First Anniversary of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, by the REV. W. J. FOX."

We very much regret, that want of space prevents us from noticing this truly eloquent and Christian Discourse as it deserves, and also from giving some animating extracts from it. The author is well known as a distinguished literary character, and one of the most celebrated English Unitarian Divines. As a pulpit orator and public speaker, he is, perhaps, unrivalled, even in the metropolis of the Empire. This beautiful discourse has prefixed to it "An Address to the Unitarians of Ireland," containing matter of serious consideration, and valuable instruction. We recommend our readers so procure it, at their earliest convenience; and pledge ourselves, that they will be amply repaid, both by pleasure and improvement.

"THE IMPARTIALITY OF GOD, ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED: A SERMON, Preached in Eustace-Street Meeting-House, Dublin, April 4th, 1831, on occasion of the First Anniversary of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, by the REV. H. MONTGOMERY, A. M."

Reasons, which must be obvious to most of our readers, preclude us from doing more than barely noticing the publication of this Discourse. Though only a few weeks out of the Press, it has already obtained a very considerable circulation; and is not likely to disappoint either the author's friends or his opponents. The subject, at least, is one of the very highest importance; and, for the manner in which it is treated, we refer to the Sermon itself.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We have received a very well written Paper from EUGENIUS, in reply to the Letters of ERASMUS, to a *Literary Lady*. We concur, generally, in our Correspondent's views, and are disposed to publish his communication; but, we have strong doubts, both as to the propriety of our originally admitting, and our farther continuing a *Metaphysical Discussion*, which cannot be very interesting to the majority of our readers. We regret exceedingly, that our valued correspondent *Erasmus*, should have discouraged, in any way, the cultivation of the female mind: for, we are fully convinced, that any great moral and social improvement must have its origin in the enlarged intellectual culture of Women.

The late meeting of the General Synod of Ulster, is full of instruction, and shall receive due attention.

The remainder of the Article "On Early Religious Instruction," commenced in our No. for June, is still mislaid. Perhaps, our correspondent could furnish us with another copy.

A Paper, "On Consistency amongst Unitarians," and other communications, have been received.

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OCTOBER, 1831.

VOL. II.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ON CONTROVERSIAL PREACHING.

I had lately a conversation with a friend on the subject of Controversial Preaching, and this has suggested to me the idea of throwing together a few miscellaneous thoughts upon it. I am the more disposed to this, as I think that very inaccurate, and in my opinion very false notions prevail with respect to it, among persons of good feeling and sound sense.

I avow myself a friend to controversial preaching—in my own sense of that term—and what that sense is, will appear best from the drift of the whole of this letter taken together. It is hardly necessary for me, in limitation of my meaning, to say, that I do *not* mean that it should constitute the whole of a minister's preaching, for there is no one likely to fall into such an error. As to how much of his public labours should be occupied in the discussion of points that are controverted among Christians, this must be determined by the circumstances of time and place. One place and one time may require more of it than another, or may require one subject of controversy to be selected rather than another: but the following remarks will have a more particular reference to the present times, and the state of the religious world in our own day. Now the circumstances of our own times are such, as to render it absolutely imperative on the faithful minister, candidly, fairly and fully, to lay before his people his own opinions on the controverted points of doctrine, with the reasons that have led him to take that particular view.

It seems to be thought by many, that those who dwell in their preaching upon such topics are departing from the examples set before them in the New Testament.

Now this I conceive to be a mistaken notion, and that on the contrary, no inconsiderable portion of that blessed book is occupied with the discussion of disputed points. What has led to the prevalent mistake on this subject is, that the controversies which were agitated in the churches, during the times of the apostles, were different from those which now excite the public interest. But this difference is much in our favour, for if so much time were spent by these holy men on points of so local and temporary a nature as the propriety of circumcising Gentile converts—of their observing the laws and institutions of Moses, and so forth—surely we shall be justified in dwelling largely upon doctrines involving the character of God, the design of the Gospel dispensation, and the means of salvation. Nor in using this language do I mean to cast a reflexion upon the writers of the New Testament, for having dwelt so much at large upon these topics. On the contrary, I feel that without these discussions the christian world would have been deprived of most interesting and important information that is incidentally conveyed. In particular, we should have lost Paul's noble assertion of the principles of christian liberty which have animated and strengthened christians in their warfare with the corruptions and impositions of established churches. We should also have been deprived of his views of many parts of the scheme of redemption, although it may be replied to this, that we should at the same time have been freed from the erroneous views that rest for their chief defence upon the misunderstood language of this apostle. I for one, however, would gladly take the evil for the sake of the spiritual pleasure enjoyed from the study of his writings, and of the greater insight which an examination of them affords into the ways of God to man: and I feel that even the difficulties of his style are useful in whetting the appetite and invigorating the powers of the mind, as is proved by the diligence and care with which men of the highest order of intellect have examined and commented on his epistles. I hope you will not mistake this for a coincidence in opinion with a sapient writer in the Orthodox Presbyterian, who once endeavoured to establish his own creed, by proving that the greater and more inextricable the difficulties in which a doctrine was involved, the greater was the certainty of

its divine origin. Granting him the premises, his conclusion would be triumphantly established, and no creed could ever come into competition with his.

But to return. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans we have thirteen pages controversial, and five practical or personal. I take it in pages rather than in chapters, as one page is equal to another in size and quantity, but the chapters are often of very different lengths. In this Epistle the line is pretty distinctly marked, but there is also a considerable proportion of all his other Epistles occupied with some controverted matter, and almost the whole of Hebrews is controversial. Now Paul's Epistles occupy about one-third of the whole New Testament; and if you exclude the historical books, they make up two-thirds of the remainder. The general Epistles have a considerable mixture of controversy, although from their nature they cannot be expected to enter as much into the minutiae of any particular point of dispute as those addressed to churches whose peculiar circumstances were well known, and under the immediate consideration of the writer. But you will say, why do I not refer to the highest authority of all—to the Lord Jesus himself. I admit that, although there are some arguments recorded between him and the Pharisees; and although several of his parables argue very closely some of the most interesting points of controversy, yet there was such an authority in his speaking, such weight in all the words that proceeded out of his mouth, as made all his precepts and decisions of disputed points be admitted by the mind as almost intuitive propositions, and that he was enabled by that spirit which he had received without measure to convey the truth so effectively to the minds of his hearers, as to put an end to all further question, and silence the disputatious spirit even of the Scribes and Pharisees. The discourses of the apostles in the Acts are almost entirely controversial, and indeed from the circumstances could hardly be otherwise: and the simple enunciation of the preceptive parts of our religion would, I fear, have failed to excite the interest that was roused by the important questions that were argued by the apostles in their missionary labours.

It is also, I suspect, an indubitable thing that if there had not been the interest excited in the minds of men

by the heated and very intemperate controversies that the reformers agitated, the cause would never have made the progress that it did. And it is a very remarkable circumstance, and very difficult to be accounted for, that the Protestant religion, all at once, as it were, by one bold, violent, and vigorous effort, established itself in the minds of those who became its adherents, and that ever since so little progress has been made, that the nations that remained Catholic then, and withstood the energetic exertions of the reformers, still continue Catholic, and are inaccessible to the most persuasive arguments that can be urged. The violence, the acrimony, the keen controversial spirit that prevailed in Luther and many others, were instrumental in the hands of Providence, in producing a change in the minds of men, most beneficial both to their spiritual and their temporal interests, and the mild and gentle voice of Melancthon would have been drowned by the infuriated shouts of monks and friars, or by the thunders and anathemas of the Papal See. I would not presume to challenge any comparison between these mighty contests and the puny disputes of the present day, much less between the giant champions of the great Protestant cause, and the pigmy disputants who may be using their vast efforts to add to one congregation, and to take from another: but we may console ourselves, that along with the evil that is so obvious, much good that is not yet apparent will result from this ferment in men's minds. Nor can we entertain a doubt, that the ultimate result will be a furtherance of sober-mindedness of opinion, of charity of sentiment, and of righteousness of life.

As these observations are professedly miscellaneous, I may be excused for bringing forward now a distinction of some use, that I ought to have mentioned almost at the very commencement, in order to keep distinct what is very often confounded. I would therefore, distinguish between doctrinal preaching and controversial: and this will assist me in conveying my views upon the subject more accurately. Doctrinal preaching, or the explanation and illustration of passages of scripture bearing upon important doctrines in the Christian scheme, should at all times occupy very much of the attention of the minister of the gospel: not to the exclusion of any subject merely practical, but in my mind

much more so than any such, or rather in all cases where it is possible, it is his duty to combine the two, so as to show the practical bearings of the doctrine under examination, and render it conducive either to warmer feelings, or to stricter practice. By controversial preaching, I understand the consideration of these same doctrines with a particular reference to the controversies that have been agitated, and the different opinions that have prevailed concerning them. Controversial preaching then is a different form or modification of doctrinal preaching, and while the latter should be very frequently practised, the former should be resorted to only when the times require it, as it appears to me that the present times eminently do. For experience proves, that in such times, it is by no means sufficient, simply to explain the truth: not enough for example, to explain that God is one, but also to prove that the scriptures do not assert him to be "three in one;" or in other words, do not support the doctrine of the Trinity: not enough to show that it was the purpose of the Divine Being to select and separate the followers of his Son from among the mass of heathens who should be considered as sanctified and saints; but to disprove the very erroneous and unscriptural view of these transactions that gave rise to the doctrines of predestination, election, and sanctification. Experience proves, I say, that this is not sufficient, for I have known several instances of preachers of whom it has been said, that their people never knew what their opinions were, because they contented themselves with the simple explanation of the truth, without bringing forward particular denominations, or dealing in those nicknames with which the different sects designate each other. These however, must not be confounded with another, and a very reprehensible class of which I am sorry to say, there are examples to be found—namely, ministers of whom it may be said, not in the language of the apostle, that they declared the *whole counsel of God*, but that not one of those who sat under their ministry for years had the slightest knowledge of their sentiments on subjects of intense interest and vast importance.

Now it is obvious that one might object to controversial preaching, without intending to discountenance doctrinal; might feel satisfaction in having the peculiarities of

his own denomination as fully and clearly as possible deduced from scripture, and object to have continually dragged before him those names that are the watchword to every unchristian feeling. Still I fear that it is to doctrinal preaching that many would profess to object; and if this be the case, it would be worth while to consider what topics must be excluded from being brought freely and fully before a christian congregation. The unity of God because of its close and inseparable connection with the doctrine of the trinity—the justice and goodness of God, involving considerations that are decisive as to the doctrines of vicarious satisfaction, predestination and original sin—the free agency and accountability of man, inexplicable in the principle of hereditary guilt, arbitrary election and absolute predestination—the whole of the scheme of redemption, except so far as the gospel was a republication of the law of nature, and a matter of fact proof of what was anticipated more or less clearly in the ante-Christian world, a future state of existence destined for the human race. These must all be either omitted or very scantily treated.

I can safely appeal to experience, as to the usefulness of the two modes of preaching, for it will be found upon inquiry, that those congregations, among the Remonstrants which boldly stood forward and braved the fury of some bigotted priests, and the odium of an ignorant community, were those to whom the counsel of God had been openly declared; and that there are many congregations still continuing under the galling yoke of bondage in the Synod of Ulster; because their ministers were unfaithful, and left their hearers unapprized upon momentous subjects, until the scrutiuizing eye of their bitter and foul-mouthed enemies, discovered and brought to light what was cloaked under such ambiguous expressions, that persons lived and died under their ministry, without suspecting that they did not agree in sentiment with that Catechism, which they desired the children under their care to learn.

It is a very common mistake to confound controversial preaching with that wrathful spirit with which it is so frequently attended. The mistake is indeed not unnatural, for such particular care has been taken by Controversialists, to preserve an indissoluble union between these,

that it requires considerable patience of mind, to form a conception of the one, unaccompanied by the other. But fortunately, we have at least two eminent instances to prove the possibility of the separation, and at the same time, to show that it would be of important service to the christian world, to have such examples in greater number. These two are John Locke, and John Taylor, of Norwich, both of whom wrote largely upon subjects of controversy, and were most careful, and as far as my memory serves me, completely successful also, in avoiding all those abusive and irritating expressions that we have now so much reason to lament. It is also worthy of observation, that the writings of these two men, have had a very great, and a continued influence, in turning the attention of men to the grand subjects of which they treated, and that therefore we may have ground for hoping, that strong reasons, temperately urged, will, in other cases find their way to men's minds, and operate as powerfully, though more silently than acrimony and abuse. Nor, I presume, will it ever be found a good way of convincing men on religious subjects, either to laugh at them or abuse them. If therefore the objection be intended only to the angry mode in which controversy is carried on, I would join most heartily in any attempts that could be made to put a stop to what can be of no service, but on the contrary, great injury to the party that adopts it. But on the other hand, if controversy cannot be carried on without these "wars and fightings;" I do not say that I would on that account banish it altogether, because it is attended with eminent service to the progress of truth, with all its alloy of evil.

There is one class from whom I would exclude controversy altogether—the young. To them it is attended with no advantage, but with very great injury. It extinguishes religious feeling at a time when feelings should make the deepest impression. It generates a taste for disputation, which is always disgusting—and intolerably so, when it leads a young person into pertinacious argument, with his seniors in age, or his superiors in mind. It never acts as a preservative against the inroads of other sentiments, but rather paves the way for them. For when a young person comes to reflect on the religious state of his own mind, and finds,

that one essential point of true Religion is absolutely wanting, I mean a pious feeling—a reverence for sacred subjects—he charges upon his doctrinal opinions, what was the result of a false course of education, and turns to some other sect which he knows less familiarly, and from which he cannot swerve again; even when he finds that their pretended feeling is hypocritical ostentation. But when I exclude controversy, I would guard as carefully against bringing them up in ignorance, which eventually produces indifference. I would instil into them from the first, the exact truth of scripture, and few of your readers have not heard of the shrewd and unanswerable objections made by mere children, from the assertions of Scripture, to the favourite doctrines of what is called orthodoxy—and when they have been told out of their Catechism, that Christ, is God over all, blessed for ever—have not felt inextricably puzzled, on reading, that Jesus prayed to God for strength—that an angel strengthened him—that he grew and waxed strong in spirit—and that the grace of God was upon him—with innumerable other instances which the child would meet with in every part of the Gospel narrative. Now, I would rather aid a child's perception of all this—I would rather direct the attention to it—and as they grew up to years of understanding, I would lead to a comparison of one passage with another, and show what every writer thought, from first to last. I would do the same with the other doctrines—without at that period of life, ever naming Trinity or Calvinism, or Arianism, and I feel little that a child so trained, would have a firmer hold of the truth, and be better secured against the sophistry of systems and schemes, than if he could brow-beat a whole synod of Divines by his disputatious confidence. I would earnestly and particularly urge upon parents, who wish to have their children soundly trained in religion, to give due weight to these remarks; and some will be found who will be able to corroborate them by their own experience, as well, as in reference to the former part of this paper, to bear testimony that their religious convictions were far better established by the calm conversation of a benevolent friend, than the angry ravings of any polemic.

CURCELLÆUS.

SUNDAY SCHOOL READINGS—GENESIS.

Cork, August 9th, 1831.

I beg leave to call your attention to the great importance of Sunday Schools among persons who profess themselves and wish to become Bible Christians.

To make the teachings of Scripture interesting to the people, is I apprehend one most ready way to make them popular. Any kind of knowledge which is acquired with pleasure, will undoubtedly show forth its fruits in practice. The American Unitarians who have outstripped us in the race for every thing that is noble and elevating to mankind, have by their modes of familiar communication, made scriptural knowledge a practical, not merely a theoretical acquirement. How long we may hesitate to adopt this republican mode of teaching is doubtful; but this is obvious, that if we wish to introduce among Irish non-conformist associations, a spirit of activity, energy, simplicity, and truth, the living example is to be found in the records of the American Unitarian congregations.

In this city we have a Sunday school in connexion with the Presbyterian congregation, the good effects of which have been most visible, even in the space of one short year. The teachers of this school meet occasionally in the committee room of the meeting-house, and having called one of their members to the chair, communicate to one another the state of their classes, their methods of teaching and so forth; in some instances they give as a specimen, a portion of their last Sunday's business: I shall detail through your journal the business of my class through a few successive Sundays, as also my manner of preparing for and reading with my companions in study, leaving the general history of our school to be communicated to your journal by our accurate, judicious, and indefatigable superintendant Mr. Samuel King.

The class appropriated to me are adults. Two unmarried men, and two married, who are working tradesmen, and four young men, sons of respectable manufacturers and shopkeepers. The principle, "that in matters of religion there should be no respect of persons," is cordially adopted among us, and is attended with the best effects. It is with great pleasure I state

that the attendance of my class is most exemplary, which is at once a stimulus and reward for the exertion of preparing for them. My plan is to appropriate every Sunday morning from ten o'clock until ten minutes before the hour of service, in the meeting-house, which is twelve o'clock, in preparing notes and arranging scriptural references, relating to portions of the Bible which come in order for the day. One hour after noon service is the time occupied in the Sunday school, and it takes at least two hours of acquirement to prepare for one hour of communication. This may seem an alarming outlay of time to those who have never been so employed, and so it did to me before I commenced this instructive labour. Indeed I stipulated that I should not be required to act as a teacher for more than three months ; but now I am happy in stating that when absence from home has unavoidably separated me from my class, the regret felt and acknowledged was mutual. In our mode of operation it was necessary to be explicit; and to effect this, I have always encouraged moderate colloquial interchange of question and answer, suggestion and objection in the class. In popular teaching it would probably be desirable if the fresh communication pervaded our method. Indeed we have always been too secret, distant, and dissocial for christian brethren ; but it is to be hoped that the pride and reservedness which have mutually estranged the various grades of members in Presbyterian congregations, (I say the pride of the humble as well as that of the exalted,) may speedily pass away before that spirit of communication and sympathy which is indispensable to the promotion of religious knowledge and religious feeling amongst us.

The books used in our attempts to understand the first work of the scripture are the Oxford edition of the received version of the Bible. It is of a portable size, and the references from passage to passage of the scripture, are valuable aids towards understanding the sense of words and phrases: it must be admitted, however, that in many instances these references index rather the words than the ideas. Mr. Welbeloved's Bible is our next help. If I could be in any way instrumental in fixing the attention of Irish nonconformists on this valuable book, I would consider myself as doing service

to the cause of truth in a trifling degree. Mr. Wel-beloved is a man of truth, and in his few simple and able notes on the Bible, he has done much to remove the sneer of the unbeliever. One grand point may be observed in his work; when a matter is obscure and difficult he says so, and does not make the confusion still more confounded by bold and ungenerous assumptions, pressed into the service of a system. Cruden's Concordance, and the improved version of the New Testament, complete the necessary library for such inquiry as it is my intention to pursue. Several of our teachers have preferred commencing with the New Testament; for junior classes I think them decidedly right. I have however, with the concurrence of my class chosen the old, and our reasons are—we find by observation and reading, that much of the false doctrine which corrupts christianity, is based on a misunderstanding of the old scriptures, and that a right understanding of the language and history of the Mosaic dispensation, would simplify the arguments which illustrate the truth and value of the gospel.

In our reading, wherever reference may be made to the christian scriptures, either from verbal explanation, illustration of habits and manners, or for doctrine, it is done. Christians in general have more opportunities of acquiring knowledge in that part of the Bible which more immediately relates to their moral instruction than in that which was given to the children of Israel; it is so with the class whose occupation I describe. They usually attend Presbyterian worship twice on each Lord's day. They also attend at the meetings of the Cork branch of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, on every Monday evening, in both of which places teachings from the New Testament are principally heard. To supply the want of knowledge which we felt respecting the ancient people of God, we have commenced a course of inquiry to lessen our ignorance, by such investigation as mere English readers can conveniently make. Thus much preliminary matter has been written to call attention through the Bible Christian, to the subject of Sunday Schools; and also to try, and interest the laity amongst us in a more general inquiry into the importance of the Old Testament to a believer, as the revealed truths of the New. It is with humility

hoped, that if the history of our readings cannot throw any new lights on the mind of any teacher in Israel, they may at least induce some learners to make themselves masters of the knowledge which may be acquired without difficulty, so as to be able to apply it to the confirmation and defence of that faith which is able to produce in us righteousness before God.

FIRST DAY'S READING.

Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1.

"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth."

"*In the beginning.*" It hence appears that there was a beginning to this system of worlds. The word *beginning* does not here apply to eternity. It means the first part of those circumstances to which the following relation applies. We do not believe that the creation of the earth was coeval with the existence of God, or in the beginning of eternity, yet this sense the limited use of the word in the passage would require; it is obvious now I think, that the word "beginning" is dependent for its signification on the nature of that circumstance to which it is relative. I remark on this word, because where it occurs in the New Testament in John's gospel, chapter one, verse two, and our Saviour is said to have been "in the beginning with God;" the assertion does not necessarily indicate any "beginning" beyond the commencement of the gospel dispensation. We find this limited sense of the word given in several parts of the Bible. Refer to John, 15th chapter, 27th verse, "And ye also (his disciples,) shall testify of me, because ye have been with me from the *beginning*." And again, in the 16th chapter, 4th verse, "And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." Our saviour here speaks not of the beginning of eternity, nor of the creation of the world, nor even of the beginning of his own life, but of the beginning of his ministry after the call of his apostles. We may also refer with advantage to many other passages in illustration of this point, as Luke, chapter 1, verse 2-3, Acts 11th chapter, 15th verse, &c. &c. Indeed it is our common practice in conversation to use the word *beginning* generally when we mean that its application should be limited by the matter related. The word is clearly

in this first verse of Genesis limited by the creation about to be related. You may perhaps think that unnecessary delay has been made here on a matter of verbal enquiry, but when you consider the value of a right use of words, and the mischief of their abuse, you will not think the preliminary delay objectionable: besides, those rules of watchfulness applied now to an individual word, will be found useful to you in your whole progress. You know the value of being complete masters of one step in knowledge, and how it facilitates every after acquirement.

GOD.

The Hebrews give to the one God the name Jehovah, which expression we are told indicates *self-existence*. This name for Deity they never pronounced, but in its place used words expressive of other attributes of the Almighty, such as those which indicated power, &c. The English word used principally to designate the Creator is God. It is Saxon and means good; certainly then, our language has adopted the most interesting of our Father's attributes to name him from—the most interesting to creatures whose nature and wants require tender mercies and goodness. Unfortunately some christians think that God is more fitly represented to man as a being of infinite vengeance, and what they unjustly call strict justice.

CREATED.

Some able writers have entertained the opinion that the earth was not "created" at the time here spoken of, but that Moses gives an account of its reorganization, by the powers of the Creator. The foundation of this objection, arises out of the geological examination of the earth. Some geologists declare, that so many layers of earth, containing remains of organized creatures, could not have been deposited within this world's date; but that it would take an indefinite number of thousands of years, to cover the remains of plants and animals as they are now found. It often happens, that even philosophers pre-conceive a theory, and if history does not bear out their notions, they reject history rather than re-examine their theories. If it be necessary that geologists should first prove, that they are in possession of the right general law, by which these deposits are

made; and next, that no circumstances have interrupted that law in its operation, for instance, the deluge: what remarkable changes a mountain torrent can make in the face of a country: what diggings up, and what deep burials it makes—how it rolls immense rocks, and changes the courses of rivers; how then can men exactly measure the effects of changes on this earth, many of which in extent and activity, were probably beyond the power of human computation. It would be quite inconsistent with our object, or indeed our capabilities, to go now into a geological and chronological investigation on the creation; to examine all the objections of the Mosaic account would stop our progress effectually; one thing however we know, that the objections are hypothetical, and since as good a system of creation has never been put forward to supplant that related by Moses, of whose authority we have no doubt; the wisest way is to accept the credible relation before us, in preference to the incredible patch-work inventions, which creation-mongers are changing every day. We find that the persons nearest the period of time alluded to, all received the Mosaic testimony. We shall not refer to many instances in proof of this assertion. Solomon believed that it was not a reformation which took place, but an actual creation, *see Proverbs, c. 8—23*, he here speaks of the time before ever the earth was. I should mention to you, that some of the objectors alluded to, believe that this earth in some shape or form was eternal. Solomon goes on in the same chapter, to speak of the time when there were no depths, &c. &c. Certainly “creation” is also used in a limited sense, as giving order or improvement to things already in existence, as in Psalm 51, verse 10, “create in me a clean heart;” and in Ephesians 4, verse 24, that ye “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness.”

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

Some of those persons who would have the earth to be a new construction, not a creation, and allege geological causes for their belief, have not that ground for a reconstruction of the heavens: now whatever took place with respect to the earth, we are told, took place also with respect to the heavens. I address this argument to christians who believe the Mosaic account under their

own modification. We take the word heavens, here to mean at least the whole system of stars, sun, moon, and clouds, which we can see. Our capability of knowing the whole of God's universe is limited, but is easy to conceive of others and more extensive creations than that of our heavens and earth. To those who have the felicity to believe that God is a being of ineffable goodness; that consistently with this attribute, the happiness of sensible creatures, the works of his hand, must far, far exceed their sufferings; and that all beings gifted with immortality, will be finally happy. It is a glorious thought to contemplate God diffusing life, the means of felicity, through nature, and thus extending blessing through myriads of beings, through spaces filled with universes far beyond our sphere, so that the grand total of creation and of joy, may be beyond the limitation of finite minds. Mr. Fontenelle has written a book to establish the probability of a plurality of worlds. We think that the revealed character of God tends to establish the probability of many systems of worlds, each peopled with creatures whose very existence multiplies and glorifies the goodness of God.

I am, &c. A LEARNING TEACHER.

A PLEA FOR CONSISTENCY, ADDRESSED TO UNITARIANS.

IT is not enough that the Unitarians are as good as another class of Christians we could name. They ought to be better. They would be, did they act up to their principles. Many, to a considerable degree, do so. These exhibit superior purity, elevation, dignity, and beauty of character. Some do not act thus; their faith and fidelity are at variance; their conduct is unworthy of their principles; they dishonour the name they assume; they bring reproach on the cause they profess to espouse. Do any who read these pages belong to this number? Let all look into their hearts, and upon their lives; then let them answer the question, each for himself, to his conscience and his God.

Consider our views of human nature. Can any be conceived of more ennobling? any better suited to raise and perfect the character? In the dark dogma of

hereditary total depravity, we have no faith ; the paralyzing one of entire moral impotency, we reject. In place of these, we adopt the encouraging, elevating truths, that we come from our Creator's hand innocent and pure ; that we are able, with the assistance God continually vouchsafes us, to do our duty ; that our Maker has given us every faculty and means requisite for working out our salvation ; and that as we use them now, will be our condition hereafter. Who does not perceive the advantage such views afford ? We rejoice in it, heartily rejoice. But do we avail ourselves of it, as we might ? Do our lives correspond to our glorious convictions ? Is it true, brethren, and do we believe it, that there is within us a divine, immortal principle ? that the inspiration of the Almighty hath given us understanding ? that, if faithful to our trusts, we shall hereafter be what angels now are ? What, then, ought not to be hoped of us ? What self respect ? What dread of every thing low and sinful ? What aspirations after excellence ? What endeavours to be worthy of our origin, our nature, our destination ? Now, do we come nearly up to the standard of our belief ? Do we not greatly fall below it ? But what is faith without works ? Why take to ourselves credit for our principles, while our practice is at war with them ? Advert to the manner in which we are accustomed to think and speak of God. Nothing revolts us more than the views some entertain of the Deity. What can be so winning as our own ? Do we not regard this great and powerful Being as our FATHER ? Do we not believe that all our thoughts and feelings, relating to him, ought to be, in the best sense of the term, filial ? Do we not say that we are his children ; that we are loved, provided for, blessed by him continually ; and that we expect no other treatment from him, either in the present or the future life, than what is perfectly consistent with parental wisdom and goodness ? Yes, and we joy in these convictions, these feelings, these hopes. But what, brethren, is our conduct ? We know well enough what it *ought* to be. We should live nearer to God, find more delight in communion with him, converse about him oftener and with greater satisfaction, and render him a more willing, affectionate, unreserved obedience, than they of a different belief. Is it so in fact ? Do

we not betray inconsistency here? Is not our fidelity unworthy of our faith? Is our piety as much better than that of other christians, as we suppose our creed to be? Why, then, any more boast of our superior views of the divine character and purposes, while our lives but ill accord with them? Would we not be liable to the charge of inconsistency? Would we recommend the principles we deem so true and salutary? Let us do something more than talk in their praise. Let us show ourselves less insensible to God's presence, less indifferent to the marks of his goodness, less cold in our devotions, less reluctant to speak of his loving kindness and tender mercy, less sluggish in performing the duties he has enjoined upon us.

Think of the light in which we view Jesus Christ. How mild, beautiful, affecting, it is. How different from the medium through which others see him. He presents himself to us as one with whom we can sympathize, and whom we may attempt to imitate with the hope of making some approaches towards the standard of his exalted virtues. He not only pointed out the way we should tread; he trod it before us. He not only taught what we must do; he did it himself. We know how he was tried, how he struggled, how he triumphed; and in this we have at once a pattern and a motive. All the dispositions we are invited to cherish, he cherished; all the virtues we are called upon to practise, he practised; the complete character we are bidden to form, he formed. Our model is before us; our instruments are put into our hands; our work we are instructed, both by precept and example, how to execute; and our reward, as was his, is in the heavens. Far otherwise would it seem to us, did we see in Jesus, the eternal, self-existent, infinite God. Who does not discern the singularly good tendency of our views? But how, brethren, have they affected us? What advantage have we derived from them? Is the example of our Saviour better imitated by us than by others? Does it take hold on our sympathies more strongly? Does it draw us after him with greater force and uniformity? If not, then let us take shame to ourselves, and learn, before it is too late, how vain it is for us to have correct opinions of our Lord's character, if they

do not purify our thoughts, hallow our affections, sanctify our lives, and prompt us to high attainments.

How beautiful, we say, is our theory of christian charity. What is it? That none should be excluded from love and fellowship for difference of opinion; none censured for mere speculative error; none treated with the least unkindness for choosing another faith, church or sect, than our own; but that all, of whatever name or party, who believe in Christ and aim to obey him, ought to be regarded as brethren, and esteemed according to their moral worth. Can any thing, we ask be better than this? Let such a law of mutual affection and behaviour prevail, and there would be a heaven on earth. But theory, brethren, is nothing without practice. What can that charity avail which is not operative? How many among us have to lament the inconsistency of some, who profess to be liberal in their sentiments, and to embrace all the good in the arms of their fellowship. How many are often shocked with the harsh expressions and ungenerous conduct of such as agree with us in the doctrine of duty, when the persons of other christians happen to be the subject of their remark or social treatment. Alas! how apt men are to deceive themselves! how apt to transfer to the score of their individual and practical deserts, the prevailing excellencies of their party and of their system. In God's name, we ask for something better than this of such as we address. We call on them to maintain a stricter correspondence between their theory and practice, between the charity they profess, and the charity they exercise. Common consistency puts in no less a claim than this; and this, who does not know Christ himself has made the test of discipleship?

What is our habit of thinking and speaking of the holy scriptures and of human creeds? The latter we hold to be worthless; the former above all price. The Bible, the Bible, we say, is our rule of faith and practice. To others, we leave the formularies of men's devising; as for ourselves, no volume shall even seem to stand upon equal footing with that of divine inspiration. So far, very well. But how do many use this sacred, this inestimable book? Are there not some who seldom read it at all? They possess it; they extol it; they are indignant when any presumes to name human creeds in

connexion with it. Yet, go into their dwelling, and you shall see it covered with the dust of many months.

Others peruse it, chapter by chapter, at stated times; but nothing is clearer than that they do so, not from love of it, but merely because they think they must. See with what a listless eye they look over its pages. See with what an animated countenance they close up the volume. See how untouched and unblessed by it they go forth to their daily business. Most of us recommend it to our children as a treasure of incalculable value? Mark the inconsistency of too many in this particular also. What discerning eye of childhood does not perceive it? In respect to other things, pleasure, wealth, fame, these little ones see their parents acting with a zeal in some degree proportionate to their acknowledged estimate of the worth of these objects. But here touching the oracles of God, which the same parents profess to regard as pointing to the true satisfactions, the true riches, the true honours, their children are allowed to witness a timid hesitation, a chilling reluctance, a strange indifference. Brethren, let it be so no more. Such inconsistency is disgraceful. It is worse. Ourselves are injured, our friends saddened, and the cause of truth, of Christ, and of God, prejudiced by it.

Take, finally, the views we cherish of the great law of retribution. We think them scriptural and rational; and we believe they afford the strongest dissuasives from sin, and the most powerful inducements to holiness. While we reject every thing like the doctrine of arbitrary, vindictive dispensations of reward and punishment, under the divine government, we hold that there is a connexion between vice and misery, and between virtue and happiness, as natural and indissoluble as that which belongs to any class of causes and effects. In other words, the bad man does or will suffer, in proportion to his badness, and the good man does or will enjoy, in proportion to his goodness, as certainly and as accordantly with the established principles of nature and Providence, as a living seed, put into the warm, moist earth, does or will vegetate. Nor is this law, as we believe, restricted in its operation exclusively either to the present, or to the future world. It belongs to both. The dissolution of the body may modify some of its re-

sults, but will not essentially alter the character of them. We hold that this life and the next is one continuous state of existence, so that all which is strictly ourself here, will be ourself there. Death we regard only, as it were, a sort of dark passage-way from the one to the other, through which the soul is but a moment in going, carrying with it all its habits of thought and feeling; all its capacities, tastes, and preferences,; all in a word, of virtue and heaven, or of vice and hell, it commenced in this introductory state of its being. What views can be more just, or more influential than these? Do we act consistently with them, brethren? Then, why is it that we deem any thing of so much value as intelligence and holiness? It is certainly time that we awake to a better sense of our duty and our interest? What! is it a fact, supported alike by reason and revelation, and have we not the least doubt of it, that misery is bound to vice, and happiness to virtue, by ties that neither time nor death will sever; that there is a law of righteous retribution whose operation nothing can long counteract; that as we sow we shall certainly, sooner or later, reap; that we must enter on the future life with the same intellectual and moral qualities with which we leave this present; and that our condition there will correspond at any given period, with the character we possess at that period; is all this true, and do we believe it? What manner of persons then, ought we to be? What purity, what intelligence, what holiness, what efforts for every virtue and every grace that can ennoble and adorn our nature, should not distinguish us? UNITARIAN ADVOCATE.

SUMMARY OF UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES.

The following summary is by Mr. Duffield, who published it in a pamphlet, on the "Thorne Unitarian Controversy." We have much pleasure in transferring it to our pages out of the Monthly Repository, as we wish it to be widely disseminated; and the local nature of the controversy prevents any extensive circulation of the pamphlet itself.—EDITORS.

"I. We believe" (he says) "in the Divine Unity. The Trinitarians always express themselves grossly

belied by those who they imagine accuse them of rejecting the doctrine. I hope, therefore, that they are prepared to admit it to constitute one ‘of the principal doctrines of the gospel;’ and surely they will not accuse us of rejecting *this* fundamental truth of the Christian religion.

“II. We believe in the absolute perfections of God; that he is infinitely great, wise, and good; perfectly holy, just, and merciful. And this is another essential doctrine of the gospel of Jesus; one, too, that is a distinguishing sentiment of his religion, for neither the Heathens nor the Mahometans, nor even the Jews themselves, were in possession of a full knowledge of the glorious truths embraced under this general head.

“III. We believe that this perfect Being may be acceptably worshipped in the name of Jesus by those who will worship him in the spirit of holiness; and we found, on this great and distinguishing Christian principle, a belief in the utter worthlessness of all superstitious services, and merely ritual observances; as also a conviction of the folly and criminality of every hypocritical pretence or fanatical parade.

“IV. We believe in the divine origin of our Saviour’s mission, and the divine authority of all his doctrines and precepts; and hence,

“V. We esteem it our duty to believe and honour him, even on the same principles on which we believe and honour God; for we regard his words as being none other than the words of God himself; and that to trust in him is to confide in the Father who sent him; hence we account it our duty to hold every view of his person and offices that can be traced to his teachings, and every principle of religion which he enforced. Hence, too, we regard him as the ruler of our spirits, as sent from God to exact that inward homage which the Author of our being can alone require.

“VI. We believe that, after the death and resurrection of our Lord, he was enabled by his Almighty Father to confer upon the apostles and primitive disciples the gifts of miraculous illumination and power, through which they were enabled to teach in uncontaminated purity all the doctrines of his religion, and to confirm the divinity of his commission by signs and wonders.

“VII. We believe that every book written by those, thus supernaturally preserved from erroneous sentiments, is to be received as inculcating a perfectly true system of religious faith; and that every such book ought to be regarded as an infallible Christian authority, and habitually resorted to as a means of religious improvement.

“VIII. We believe that it is the duty of all to love their Maker with their whole strength, their brethren of mankind as themselves, and to cultivate a hungering and a thirsting after every branch of righteousness. That it is also their duty to adopt these inward principles as the directors of their practice, as well as the objects of their respect; to display them in the general tenor of their lives, and to have them deeply imprinted upon their characters; and that, never esteeming that they have already attained perfection, it is their duty to leave the things which are behind, and press forward, to the end of their lives, toward the mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus their Lord.

“IX. We believe in the exceeding sinfulness of sin, (that is, of the actual perpetration of evil) that it totally incapacitates the mind for true happiness; and that as long as the prevailing love of it abides in the heart, the offender is an alien from the kingdom of heaven.

“X. We believe that all men have fallen short of the duty which they owe to God, and in some part of their lives have polluted themselves with the guilt of sin.

“XI. We believe that Christ came to take away sin, and to deliver his followers from the consequences of those that have been abandoned.

“XII. We believe that repentance and faith are the conditions which this Saviour of the world was empowered to lay down for man's acceptance with his Maker; repentance, such as will fill the mind with a horror of evil; and faith, which shall be effectual in making him anxiously alive to the importance of cultivating holy and virtuous habits.

“XIII. We believe that he who is himself resolutely and perseveringly anxious to lead a new life will be heard not only in his fervent supplications for pardon, but also in his devout prayers for the Divine assistance and blessing: that the Divine influence is extended to

every true penitent, so as to enable him to succeed in his efforts to attain salvation from sin and its direful effects.

“XIV. We believe that our Lord has truly revealed a future state of immortal and eternal happiness for his faithful followers, and a fearful state of justly apportioned retribution for all who wilfully reject his offers of pardon and acceptance.

“XV. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and a future judgment, when Christ shall come in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, to give to every one according to his works.

“Do these principles,” asks the writer, while he tells us, and rightly, that the catalogue might easily be enlarged, “constitute ‘a very small portion of the gospel’? Can it be properly said of those who hold these views that ‘their system embodies little but those principles of false philosophy which the apostles condemn’? Are these the parts of ‘a system of not believing’?”

JOANNA BAILLIE, ON THE NATURE AND DIGNITY OF CHRIST.

WE have now the pleasure of adding the name of this eminent writer, to the list of those who have risen superior to the prejudices of early education, and to the still more formidable obstacles arising from unpopularity and misrepresentation, in order to bear their testimony to some of those great truths which it is our special object to inculcate upon the public mind. We are obliged for want of access to the work itself, to have recourse to one or two extracts that we have seen, which will serve both to show the nature of the work and to recommend it to our readers.—EDITORS.

“We cannot, I should think, be far wrong in believing that the simplest and most obvious meaning of the words, when not inconsistent with the general scope of the context, is the real meaning of any passage of the Gospels or Epistles; for, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the writers were commissioned to instruct the simple and ignorant. Now this would have been very imperfectly done, had matters important to our faith been left by them to be only deduced, by ingenious

process of reasoning, from their words, by the Christian teachers who should follow them in succeeding ages, and teachers, too, not guided by divine inspiration. If, to avoid this difficulty, we suppose the Holy Spirit to have guided also the successive fathers of the church, who in many points differed from one another materially, how shall we get out of the labyrinth? One teacher, of honest character, is as well entitled to call himself inspired as another, and we should then be forced to take refuge from confusion and discord in an infallible earthly guide; which, to the great misfortune of Christendom, was at last actually done. Nay, we must own, that something near akin to it was also done by the leaders of the Protestant Church, enlightened as they comparatively were, when they asserted that such and such of their own explanations of Scripture must necessarily be believed.”—Pp. 9, 10.

“It appears to me that Jesus Christ, through the whole of the Gospels, speaks of himself as receiving his power from God. In the Acts and the Epistles likewise the apostles speak of him as deriving his power and glory from God the Father, not only when he is mentioned as a man upon earth, but in his glorified state after his ascension. And, indeed, it is as ascended to heaven and on the right hand of God that they almost constantly speak of him to the earliest converts. There are but two passages in the New Testament which appear to me clearly to favour the first of our three mentioned sects, or our High Church doctrine, which, with little limitation, may be termed the professed doctrine of all established churches in Christendom; and these are the three first verses of St. John’s Gospel, and that passage which is to be found from the 5th to the 12th verses of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians. The latter seems to me the strongest and most direct. ‘Being,’ says the apostle, ‘in the form of God, he thought it not robbery, to be equal with God.’ Of the first part of these passages Paley and Sherlock,* though drawing from it different conclusions, say that the words in the original will bear a different interpretation. Of this I cannot pretend to judge; but if, in our common version

* “See Paley’s Sermons on Hebrews xiii. 8, and Sherlock’s Sermons on Philippians ii. 9.”

of the Epistle, the interpretation or translation of the first part of the passage be right, it is very obvious that the last, which says, 'therefore God, [even his God,]' &c. &c. must be wrong, for, they are utterly inconsistent with one another.* The introductory verses to St. John's Gospel, where it is said, 'in the beginning was the Word,' &c., &c., are not in my opinion so strong as the above-mentioned assertion of St. Paul; for a being so great and excellent as to be endowed with power and wisdom to create this world, might be called God from such derived glory, without implying any equality with the Supreme God from whom he has derived every thing. And in admitting such latitude in the use of this divine title, we are in some degree authorized by our Saviour himself. When accused of blasphemy by the Jews for seeming to make himself equal with God, this is his defence:—'Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?' If we suppose him as St. John and St. Paul assert, to have created this world, we may likewise naturally suppose that our sun and all that revolves round it were created by him, acting with the delegated power of his great Father. And the discoveries of modern astronomy make this a less extravagant notion than it would have been in the days of the apostles, when the earth was believed to be the centre of the universe. For by what agents the Supreme Being may have thought fit to people the regions of space with such innumerable suns and planets which our mortal eyes, assisted and unassisted, do behold, it is not for us to conjecture: we look up and adore, and then with becoming reverence bow down our heads to the earth. This idea, too, appears to me in beautiful accordance with the doctrines of atonement

* "The usual reply to this objection—that the exaltation here meant regards Jesus Christ in his human nature only—appears to me an ingenious subtlety to evade the objection, not to answer it. To be exalted beyond every name that is named in heaven, would certainly be great honour to human nature, as personified in Christ, but would be no honour or exaltation at all to that Divine Being, who had thought it no robbery to be equal with God."

and mediation for our transgressions which are so plainly taught throughout the New Testament, and is reconcilable with all that is said of our blessed Lord in holy writ. There are besides a very few expressions in the Epistles of St. Paul which seem to favour, in some degree, this High Church doctrine, and might by a subtle reasoner be made to support it; but with subtle reasoning this work has nothing to do, and my reader has no doubt noticed those expressions, and is as well qualified to judge of them as I can pretend to be. In short, it appears to me, that a person of plain sense, who, being previously unacquainted with this article of our orthodox creed, should read the New Testament with serious attention, might do so without being aware that such a doctrine is therein taught at all. For in reading a book full of figurative expressions, he would never think of understanding any of them literally, when at variance with the general sense of what they were introduced to enforce and illustrate. Metaphor gives both lightness and strength to instruction; for containing, as it does, an implied simile or comparison, the imagination enjoys its pictured object while the understanding is making out its lesson. To receive such forms of speech literally leads to confusion and absurdity; and whether an expression in any book ought to be received literally or metaphorically, must be known by its agreeing or not agreeing with the context. How shall we, for instance, deal with the four following passages of scripture? ‘This is my body broken for you, &c. This is my blood shed for the remission of sins.’ ‘I and my Father are one.’ ‘Neither pray I for these (his disciples) alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word: that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.’ ‘If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to go into life halt and maimed, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into hell fire.’ If we take the first of these passages literally, the doctrine of Transubstantiation is established. If the second is so taken, viz. as not meaning union of concord only, but identity, our High Church creeds

will be upheld by it to their utmost stretch; but what shall we do then with the third, where the same expression is repeated? for there we must be satisfied with the union of concord alone, as identity of the disciples with each other and with their blessed Master is impossible. The last of the above texts, 'if thy right hand offend thee,' &c., enjoins what is, indeed, possible, but has not, I believe, given much disturbance to either churchmen or laity, though as well entitled to do so as some others which have been causes of bitter contention. Metaphor is meant to give clearness and scope to interpretation, not to chain it down, or encumber it with shackles. It is fitted to give pleasing exercise to two of our noblest faculties. While the one is enjoying its image, the other is tracing its lesson. Imagination and understanding are natural and pleasant helpmates, who work to one another's hands very profitably, and were not bestowed upon us by the great Giver of all good gifts that we should divide and separate them as aliens from one another."—Pp. 123, 129.

ON MISSIONS.—MADDEN'S TRAVELS IN TURKEY.*

MANY will be disposed to represent us as hostile to Missions in publishing the following extract: but this is not the fact. We should be rejoiced beyond measure to know that the glad tidings of Salvation resounded to the uttermost ends of the earth. What we *are* hostile to is the mode of conducting these Missions, which, we have long felt assured, is an expenditure of vast sums of money on a fruitless attempt. We require no further proof of this, (although there is no deficiency of such,) than the case of Rajah Rammohun Roy, who was proceeding in the reformation of the Hindoos in the most practicable and effectual manner, in the way most closely analogous to that in which Jesus Christ himself proceeded, viz:—in propounding to them the admirable precepts of Jesus, that are so powerful towards convincing us of sin—giving us a taste for the exalted pleasures of holiness, and encouraging us to seek the

* Travels in Turkey, Egypt, &c., &c., by R. R. Madden, Esq., M. R. C. S. 2 vols. 8vo.

approbation of God by acts of temperance and self-denial, justice and charity, piety and obedience to the will of God. In this most useful career he was stopped by Dr. Marshman, a missionary, who instead of availing himself of the most efficient fellow-worker that could possibly be thrown in his way, scornfully rejected him; denied him to be a Christian, and paralyzed all his exertions by a controversy which we indeed for our own sakes are far from regretting, because it ended in the publication and dissemination of one of the most temperate, sound and judicious confutations of the Trinitarian heresy that we are acquainted with.—EDIT.

“It is in vain to delude ourselves with the belief that we are largely contributing to the civilization of the East, by assisting the Bible Society in “the conversion of the Heathen.” The knighterrants of Christianity, indeed, parade every corner of the kingdom. The Scriptures indeed have been *translated* into a hundred mutilated tongues; and vast sacrifices of money and of truth have been made in the cause of eastern proselytism. To convert, it is thought, is to civilize: in my apprehension, to civilize is the most likely method to convert. Our missionaries have been totally unsuccessful, for they commenced at the wrong end. I speak on this point from much reflection and a long acquaintance with the subject. They relied on the abstruse dogmas of the church, rather than on the mild doctrines of Christianity, for persuasion. The Turk had to digest the Trinity before he was acquainted with the beautiful morality of the gospel. The Greek had to stomach the abuse of “the holy fire,” before he was made sensible of the advantages of a purer worship. The Catholic had to listen to the defamation of his creed before he was convinced of a more rational religion; and if they were so successful as to shake him in his faith, he had then to decide whether he would be a Methodist, or a Presbyterian, or a Calvinist, or an English Protestant, or a German Lutheran; for our missionaries in Egypt and Syria are of as many conflicting sects. But such is the perversity of the human heart, those wretched Arabs, morally as well as physically blind, continue “to walk in darkness and the shadow of death,” obstinately refusing the light we would fain force upon them; and

when they are reproved, they have the audacity to say, "*we have the faith which our fathers followed, and we are satisfied with it.*" A temporal profession has sometimes produced a temporary change; but this is rare; for the conversion of a Mussulman would necessarily consign the convert to the grave: but if, in secret, a proselyte be made, the event under the magnifying lens of the "Missionary Herald," makes a flourishing appearance. "The conversion of the Heathen;" heads a chapter, the Evangelical reviewers chuckle over "the triumph of the Book," and John Bull pays another year's subscription, to suport "the cause of *truth.*" A Jew here, whom the Rev. Joseph Wolff "left impressed with the truths of Christianity," showed me a splendid copy of the Scriptures, which that gentleman had given him. I was astonished to find the New Testament had been torn out; I begged to know the reason; the man acknowledged to me that he had torn out the New Testament after Mr. Wolff's departure. I accompanied one of the missionaries to the synagogue, who in the middle of the worship commenced distributing tracts. I saw some of them thrown down; others were deposited, without a regard, on the forms. Surely the zeal was indiscreet which for any purpose disturbed the performance of religious duties; and assuredly a Hebrew missionary would have been roughly handled by the beadle of St. Paul's had he intruded himself, on the Sabbath, between the congregation and their God, to distribute versions of the Talmud. In alluding to the many suppositious conversions which abound in Mr. Wolff's book, I impugn not that gentleman's veracity; but I have good reason to know that he and his enthusiastic brethren are imposed upon by the needy and the vile: that these gentlemen are good and pious, I am well convinced: and I consider it an honour to have been acquainted with men of such worth and amiability as the Rev. D. M'Pherson, Mr. Nicolaison, and Mr. Muller."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

GENTLEMEN,—I am well aware that the task you have undertaken for the good of others, is a difficult one, and I feel disposed to make due allowance for your occasional compliance with the will of others, even in opposition to your own judgment. That judgment is I believe with me, when I object to your having commenced the discussion respecting Professor Ferrie's lectures to the ladies, by admitting Erasmus' first letter, and your insertion of the letter respecting the advocates of the Continental Society, in your last number. I dislike, as much as the writer of that letter can do, the harsh and unchristian manner in which Unitarians are spoken of at such meetings; I regret it on account of the speakers themselves, and on account of the tendency it has to increase that animosity which is so disgraceful to all who indulge in it; but we should remember what spirit we ought to be as disciples of Jesus. Though reviled, and we think unjustly reviled, we ought not to revile again; though motives are attributed to us, which we are conscious do not actuate us, we should not be ready to attribute improper motives to others; but should rather charitably hope that which we disapprove proceeds rather from erroneous views of the subject, than from bad feelings. Even if not able to reconcile their conduct to our own views of duty, it would be more dignified as well as more conformable to the character we should strive to attain, to leave them to themselves and not to irritate what we consider wrong by exposing them to ridicule or censure. Your own better judgment would have induced you not to print that letter, which probably the cooler reflection of the writer himself would have approved. It was evidently written under a strong excitement, from a sense of ill-treatment and misrepresentation, and though I cannot concur in the remarks made, I do not think that the gentlemen attacked have so much reason to complain at receiving *tit for tat*, as that the Unitarian part of the community have to regret that a publication under their patronage should admit such bitter recrimination, and such gross personality. The other controversy I refer to is not liable to the same objection. Neither Erasmus nor his opponent have transgressed the proper li-

mits of discussion ; and the only objection is, that the subject is foreign to your work, and not likely to be acceptable to your readers. Nineteen pages of your last number were occupied with it, and it seems scarcely fair when you have published Erasmus' letters, not to admit of a full reply ; yet I fear that the longer the discussion is continued, the more difficult it will be to break it off. Your object should be solely to diffuse what you conceive to be just views of religious truth. Much of your matter is necessarily controversial, and assailed as you have been, it can scarcely be expected that you should not vindicate with spirit your opinions and your conduct. But I trust you will in future reject with firmness whatever your better judgment condemns, and be content with such just rebukes as are contained in the excellent letters of Christianus, without admitting such hasty and harsh remarks as it has been my object to condemn.

MELANCTHON.

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA.*

IN the absence of historical data, I must pass over the ancient rise and progress of the Unitarians in Transylvania, and can only touch in a few words upon their present state. Dr. Thomas Rees has related part of their history in his "Translation of the Racovian Catechism, Lond. 1818," a work which I have had the good fortune to see. I am able to give the following facts in addition to his statements ; 1st, in regard to their political condition ; 2dly, their religious or ecclesiastical state ; and 3d, their modern literature.

1st. Their political condition. The Unitarian religion has existed for 280 years in Transylvania, under many and almost hopeless difficulties and vicissitudes. In the middle of the 16th century it flourished under the exertions of Francis David and Dr. George Blandrata. At that time John Zapolija was Prince of Transylvania, when almost all Transylvania and some parts of Hungary were Unitarian. After his death it had a severe struggle with other religions, viz. the Catholic, the

* Translation of Alexander Farkas' Account of the Unitarians of Transylvania, communicated in Latin to the Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

Reformed and the Lutheran. It retained, however, its political and legal existence. In the 17th century, Reformed Princes governed Transylvania, who drew over many of the more opulent Unitarians to the Reformed religion. In the 18th century, when Transylvania united itself by treaty with the House of Austria, although a treaty of the years 1690 and 1692, with Leopold the Great, already subsisted, there were four received religions in Transylvania, namely, the Catholic, the Reformed, the Unitarian, and the Lutheran; and it was expressly provided that each of them should have the same laws, the free exercise of their religion, and an equal right to civil offices. However, this treaty did not long continue in force. The Catholic religion quickly raised its head, and declared itself predominant with the reigning family. Various churches were taken from the Unitarians, and the chief men were expelled by an armed band from the Cathedral Church at Kolosvar. The past century was fatal to the Unitarians, particularly from the year 1730 to 1780. During these years, Maria Theresa, then reigning, took pains to spread the Roman Catholic religion by every means, by bribes and promises. She excluded the Protestants, and particularly the Unitarians, under various pretences, from all offices; increased by various favours the number of those who went over to the Catholic religion, and so worked upon the more opulent by the promise of honours, that the greater part of them began to change their religion. In this sad state, deprived of almost all political existence, shut out from office, brought down to the dust, the Unitarians remained till the year 1790. In that year through the instrumentality of Leopold, and later in 1792, under the Emperor Francis I., the pristine form of administration and the vigour of the laws were restored; the Unitarians also, in many respects, recovered their rights, and some began to be employed in public offices. Now the Unitarians have one Aulic Councillor; one Prothonotary at the Royal court, descended from the Polish Unitarian exiles; three Court Assessors. There are two government Secretaries, and some also have been placed in the County Assemblies.

Although, however, it is provided, by express laws, that an equal proportion should be taken from each of

the received religions in Transylvania, this law is not always strictly observed; and since the Unitarians are fewer in number than the rest, as well as inferior in property, they cannot always maintain their rights with a firm footing, and on that account not unfrequently suffer various wrongs. The Unitarian body have exhibited their grievances in the councils of the kingdom, and from the year 1790, have demanded their reparation; but, from various impediments, to this day, they want a decision from the authorities.

2dly. As regards their ecclesiastical or religious condition. This was formerly, and especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, very flourishing in Transylvania, but when, in the 18th century, their numbers began to decline, many churches were taken from them, and others they were obliged to cede to the Catholics. Now there are about 47,000 Unitarians, and about 127 parishes. In each parish there is one minister, and one precentor employed as master in the school. In each parish there exists, under one curate of the church, a domestic Consistory or Presbytery, whose members are chosen from the more influential hearers of the respective churches. This domestic consistory takes care of the parochial buildings, by subscriptions collected from private persons, superintends the local schools, and directs the domestic affairs and economy of religion. The ministers and the precentors are supported from the funds of their respective auditors, in such a manner, indeed, that certain arable lands and storehouses are assigned to them; the use of the wood is granted; and some of their hearers give them annually a certain quantity of corn, which they call capecia or kepe. No one receives a salary from the public funds; the hearers themselves provide every thing. But in many churches, the ministers are almost entirely reduced to the economy of the farm, and live in very straitened circumstances upon its produce. These 127 churches are again classed into ten districts, and these districts are entrusted to the superintendence of as many arch deacons. The ministers appointed under the same arch deacon hold meetings of the district every three months, where the business of the district is transacted, the ordinations by the supreme consistory are read over, but principally matrimonial causes are put forward and sifted. All these

churches and their ministers are subject to the superintendence of the supreme consistory, which has its residence in Kolosvar. The members of the supreme consistory are—a superintendent; a general notary; the professors of the college; besides the local ministers of Kolosvar, and all the more influential secular Unitarians living in Kolosvar, or engaged in public offices, and others also dwelling in the counties. In this supreme consistory, generally assembling every week, the ministers called to different vacant churches are ordained, the civil rights of the religion are defended, the differences of parishes are discussed, matrimonial causes, as in a court of appeal, are decided, and other matters of business and religion are considered. Besides these ecclesiastical courts, every year, in the month of August, a general synod is held, to which all the members of the supreme consistory, all the archdeacons, and other Unitarians of note, repair; where chiefly the newly-elected ministers undergo a public examination in doctrinal and pastoral theology, and are, by the superintendent, invested with the sacred office. But besides this, the general grievances of the Unitarians, their spiritual and political affairs are considered, and measures are taken for protecting the civil rights of the religion.

3dly. Their present state, in regard to literature. The Unitarians have, in many of their churches, but not yet in all, lower or common schools, where, during the six winter months, the youth of both sexes are taught to read and write, and are instructed in the principles of religion and morality. A better organization of these schools is, however, at present much desired. Besides these lower schools, the Unitarians have two gymnasia in Thorda and St. Kerebtur, where, by a professor resident there, and a senior, besides the common studies, (combining a knowledge of the Latin Language,) geography, history, arithmetic, and the elements of dogmatic theology are taught. In these two gymnasia, there are annually about three hundred youths. There is in Kolosvar one college, whose building was erected by the munificence of an opulent man, named Ladislaus Tuzi. The Unitarian youths resort hither from the lower schools, and the two gymnasia above mentioned, to study the higher branches of edu-

cation. Besides the more common studies, which were formerly taught by five preceptors, but now by three. Latin literature is taught here, philosophy, history, geography, mathematics, physics, and especially doctrinal, moral, and pastoral theology; and besides these, the German, Greek, and Hebrew languages. Almost all these things are taught in Latin, but some in the Hungarian language.

The liberal and systematic method of teaching the Unitarians, but especially the exemplary discipline, the order and moral deportment of the youth in this college and the gymnasia, have so much attracted public esteem, that not a few of the youth even of other religions frequent the schools and college of the Unitarians. The Unitarians have in their gymnasia a very small library. In the college at Clausenberg there is also a library, composed of classic authors and ecclesiastical works, among which those volumes are conspicuous which the English Unitarians in former years have sent there. But it wants the authors of more recent days, owing to a deficiency of funds. Here too I am compelled to mention the unpleasant circumstance, that in this college there is scarcely any foundation, and the youths are for the most part provided with no pecuniary aid, so that only so many can come to college and complete their studies as can bring from home sufficient for their support, whilst the others, the greatest part of the Unitarian youths, are precluded by poverty from pursuing the higher sciences. This is a very great impediment to the progress of Unitarianism, since, by the laws of Transylvania, those only can be employed in political offices, who have completed their studies at college. But most unpleasant is this circumstance, that the professors, who have been reduced from five to three only, can be but scantily paid, and they are often obliged to struggle with domestic difficulties. In order that these weighty impediments to the progress of Unitarianism may be removed, the Supreme Consistory has of late years urged the faithful Unitarians to raise a general fund; but the results of a spontaneous subscription have been consumed in part by previous expenses, and in part by the repair of the church at Clausenberg, which was falling into ruins. From ancient times many of the Unitarians have been employed in literary exercises, especially during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Having premised these things, it is very delightful to me to add two circumstances more; and, first, that the more rational and erudite part of the Hungarian public lean, with a decided inclination, towards Unitarianism, and political circumstances alone prevent the greater part of Transylvania from professing publicly the Unitarian religion. The second circumstance is, that from the ten years since the English Unitarians first gave intelligence of their own existence to the Taansylvanians, in consequence of their fraternal connexion, not a few of the Unitarian youths have begun to learn with zeal the English language, the history, the literature, and the manners of the English. Of the Unitarians especially, Louis Kelanen and Stephen Kovars, have given the chief specimens of progress in learning the English language. Louis Kelanen is already able to give lectures on the grammar of the English language, and now he intends to translate the works of Shakspeare into Hungarian. The minds of some have gone so far as to aim at the establishment of a chair of the English language in the college at Clausenberg, in order to facilitate mutual communication with the English Unitarians; but this plan must be for the present deferred for want of the funds necessary for the salary of the professor.



ON LUKE XXII. 36.

WE have been requested by a valuable correspondent to remove a difficulty which he feels in reconciling our Saviour's words, Luke xxii. 36. "And he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one," to the usual tenor of his instructions—to his precepts against resisting evil—to his directions to turn the left cheek when smitten on the right one, and to what he says to Peter shortly after—"Put up thy sword again into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The difficulty which he experiences, arises from a misapprehension of our Saviour's meaning, and it is not surprising that he should fall into a mistake which the apostles themselves did not avoid. They understood Jesus to speak literally, and replied that there were two swords among them. But

our Lord was not speaking literally. He was, according to the manner so prevalent in the East, using these words to impress upon their minds that danger, and very serious danger was fast approaching—that the time of peace was at an end, and the time of trouble and persecution was near at hand. It was no precept for the use of the sword even in self-defence, that he was giving, but simply a prophetic intimation of the near approach of danger; representing the case to be so urgent as to require them even to sell a part of their ordinary dress to arm themselves against it. The apostles seem to have taken up the words literally, upon which our Lord replied “It is enough;” not meaning that two swords were sufficient for their defence against the danger which immediately threatened them, but observing that they did not rightly understand him, he put an end to the subject in those words—as we very often use the word “enough,” to intimate that we wish no further allusion to the subject. This interpretation is corroborated by the context which shows that our Lord’s design was to contrast the former mission on which he had sent them, without purse or scrip or shoes, and in which they yet lacked nothing, with the hardships, difficulties, and dangers they would have to undergo when he should be removed from them by the violence of his enemies. There have been other interpretations proposed, but they seem very harsh and unsatisfactory, and we consider this to be the true explanation, which we hope will remove our correspondent’s scruples.

EDITORS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—The recent death of the Bishop of Blois, better known as Abbe Gregoire, reminds me of a paper in French, which I received some years ago. If you think it will be acceptable to any of your readers, it is at your service. To the translation, I shall prefix a few particulars in the life of this celebrated man.

Yours,

WILLIAM BRUCE.

MEMOIR.

Henri Gregoire was born in 1750, and was the author of several liberal works before the Revolution. In 1789, he was appointed deputy from the clergy of

Lorraine, to the States General; and he was one of the first ecclesiastics, who joined the Tiers Etat, and took the oaths of adherence to the constitution for the clergy. In the Constituent Assembly, he proposed a declaration of duties to accompany the declaration of rights. In the first sitting of the Convention, he proposed the abolition of royalty, and afterwards voted for the conviction of the king, but objected to the sentence of death, which he refused to sign.

He courageously defended his religious opinions, in defiance of the menaces and abuse heaped upon him. When the Commune of Paris would substitute the worship of *reason*, and the archbishop Gobel apostatized, the bishop of Blois was summoned in full assembly to follow his example; but he rejected the proposal in a magnanimous speech, and demanded the freedom of public worship. He obtained the liberation of the refractory priests, crowded together on the floating bridges at Rochfort; and after the Revolution, he demanded that the churches should be opened. Under the Consulate he manfully maintained his religious and republican principles; three times refusing a place in the Conservative Senate. He opposed the concordat, and voted against the establishment of the imperial government. He combated the restoration of the titles of nobility, and showed his opposition to the divorce of Josephine. He was treated with neglect both on the return of the Bourbons, and during the hundred days. Persecuted by all parties, he said to M. de Richlieu, "I am like granite, they may break, but they cannot bend me;" and withdrew into retirement. There he revised and finished his "History of Sects." For this purpose, I presume, he dictated the following paper.

When his last illness assumed a serious character, he requested the minister of his parish to administer the sacrament; but the archbishop announced, that spiritual aid would be refused, if he did not renounce the civic oath given to the Constituent Assembly. This brought on a correspondence with the archbishop, which terminated in a formal refusal of the rites of sepulture. The civil authorities then possessed themselves of the church of l'Abbaye-au-Blois, where the service was performed by four priests, against whom interdicts were shortly issued. In his last illness he

was visited by La Fayette; and these two Patriarchs of the Revolution took a last and touching farewell.

TRANSLATION.

“Bishop Gregoire has requested me to procure for him, for his work, some information on the new religious sects, which have been formed in the counties of Down, Antrim, and Armagh, and to obtain from some able divine copious and plain answers to the questions contained in the inclosed paper.” w. w.

“1. Since the beginning of the 18th century, to the present time, what are the remarkable changes that have taken place in the different Protestant and other sects as to doctrine, morals, public worship, and discipline?”

“2. Are their creeds, symbolical books, confessions of faith, and catechisms, still the same; or have they undergone any modification?”

“3. Has their Doctrinal Teaching, whether in the churches or in the university chairs, or else where, experienced any change?”

“4. Has the system of the Neologians, or new Teachers many partisans, and what have been the origin, ramifications and present state of this system?”

“5. What authors, dead or living have espoused this new method of explaining, or rather perverting (denaturer) the Holy Scriptures?”

“6. What writings have been published for the purpose of exposing and refuting these new doctrines?”

“7. What controversies have been carried on among these different sects, during the foresaid period?”

“8. What ideas may we form on the present state of the discussions concerning Rationalism, and Supernaturalism, Mysticism, Kantism, &c.?”

“9. What new sects arose in the eighteenth century?”

“10. Have different sects made any progress in reconciling their differences?”

“11. Do the same prejudices and aversions continue against the Catholic Church?”

“12. Are changes in religion frequent, and what is the nature of these changes?”

“13. What effects have been produced by the celebration of the third century of the Reformation?”

“14. According to the present state of things, what conjecture may we form of the future condition of Protestant churches?”

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—In reference to a letter which appeared in your last number, I wish, through you, to state, that, though at the late meeting of the Continental Society, I did state that Unitarianism is the high road to infidelity, I neither called Unitarians avowed or secret infidels, nor used any expression, calculated to convey such a statement to the audience. This declaration rests not only on my own recollection, but on the unanimous opinion of all who were present at the meeting, to whom I have had an opportunity of speaking on the subject.

My authority for the fact of hearers having been paid for attending an Unitarian preaching, is the "Manchester Discussion" between the Orthodox and Unitarians, which has been before the public uncontroverted for a number of years. Yours, JOHN EDGAR.

26th September.

Intelligence.

MEETING OF THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

Larne, Tuesday, September 6.

On Tuesday, at twelve n'clock, the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster assembled in Larne, in the Meeting house of the First Presbyterian Congregation of that town, for the purpose of holding their second annual meeting since their separation from the General Synod of Ulster. The Rev. WILLIAM PORTER, Moderator for the last year, opened the business of the meeting by delivering a sermon. He commenced by stating, briefly, the grounds upon which they felt it their duty to separate from the General Synod of Ulster. These had no immediate connexion with religious doctrines, but related solely to the right of taking the Bible alone as the standard of belief, without having the opinions or doctrines of men forced upon them. According to the principles upon which their body was constituted, Calvinists as well as Unitarians might be members of it. For himself, he gloried in being a Unitarian: but his opinions he held as his own; and, in advocating them, he wished not be understood as appearing to represent those of his brethren, which they too had a right to hold for themselves. After these introductory observations, he stated, that he purposed taking up, at some length, the Calvinistic doctrine of the co-existence of the divine and human natures in Christ, or, what divines had called the Hypostatic Union. This he considered as lying at the foundation of Trinitarianism. If he could overturn this doctrine, the superstructure

must give way, and Trinitarians be compelled to surrender at discretion. Having fixed upon the subject, he began to think of some text which seemed to speak of this Hypostatic doctrine; but, here he met with a great difficulty, for no such text was to be found in Scripture, notwithstanding the prominence and importance of the doctrine. In this difficulty, he determined to select a text of a pretty general nature, which would leave him considerable latitude. He had, therefore, selected the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, 5th chapter and 21st verse—"Try all things; hold fast that which is good." The reverend gentleman then proceeded directly to the discussion of the doctrine which he had spoken of; and the rest of his sermon was devoted to that object, with occasional references to collateral doctrines. It was more, in point of close reasoning, like the lecture of a philosopher than an ordinary discourse from the pulpit; and yet, so happily were references to Scripture, and familiar illustrations introduced, that principles and arguments were made to arrest the attention of the commonest mind. The discourse lasted for three hours all but a few minutes; and yet, though the audience were mixed, we believe their attention was completely fixed throughout.

Mr. Blakeley was then unanimously chosen Moderator for the ensuing year.

Mr. Porter was unanimously elected Clerk.

The Clerk then proceeded to read the Minutes of last year. A good deal of conversation took place on the reading of the fundamental regulations of Synod which had been adopted.

The Synod adjourned at six o'clock. *Wednesday, Sept. 7.*

The Clerk proceeded with reading the minutes of last year. When the resolution was read, requesting that Mr. Mitchel and Mr. Montgomery permit their sermons, preached at the Synod then held, to be published.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said, that he had fully intended complying with the flattering request of his brethren. The sermon, however, having been, in great part, preached from short notes, he had, shortly after the time referred to, brought it out for the purpose of completing it for the Press; but by some accident for which he could not account, it had fallen aside, and was not found by him, until eight or nine months afterwards. In the meantime, Mr. Mitchel had published his sermon along with a second edition of his volume of sermons. He (Mr. M.) thought, therefore, that the time for publishing his discourse, which was rather of an ephemeral character, as being connected with the circumstances of the occasion, was past; and, though he was ready to do whatever his brethren might wish, he thought they should not put themselves to the expense of publishing it now.

Mr. S. C. NELSON observed, that various documents connected with the separation of the Presbytery of Antrim from the General Synod of Ulster, had been published at the time that separation took place. Those were now very valuable; and he thought it desirable, that the Remonstrants should leave behind them a full statement of the causes of their quitting the Synod. Such a document might be highly important at a future time.

The suggestion thrown out by Mr. Nelson seemed to meet with general approbation; and it was agreed, that Mr. Montgomery's sermon be published, and Mr. Mitchel's republished, together, as originally intended.

When that part of the minutes was read, in which the establishment of a fund for defending persecuted Ministers, aiding poor Congregations, &c., was recommended, those gentlemen who had gone to England as a deputation to collect subscriptions for the fund, were requested to give a statement of their proceedings.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said, the interests of the fund had not been neglected. A meeting had been held in Belfast; and the proposition had been met, as any such measure always is met in that place, with the greatest spirit and liberality. On that occasion, the sum of nearly 1000*l.* was subscribed towards the fund; and, in the course of a short time, about 1800*l.* was subscribed. It was intended, at that time, to make more extensive applications; but that intention was prevented from being carried into effect by several causes. They were, afterwards, about to proceed, but some individuals whose judgment could be relied on, suggested that it would be desirable, before going farther, to draw up a deed of trust, that they might be able to put into the hands of the public the charter of their fund. He might here state, that the name *Presbyterian Fund* appeared too limited a designation; and that it was made so as to be applicable to persons of all religious sentiments. There was no reason why a man, honestly holding any doctrinal opinions, whether he might be Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic, or whatever religious sect he might belong to, should not meet with aid if subjected to inconvenience or persecution for the sake of conscience. It was, therefore, determined to assume the name of *Association for the protection of the rights of conscience in Ireland*, thus generalizing the object of the fund. In proceeding with their design, they did not limit the matter to themselves. They applied to the Presbytery of Antrim and the Synod of Munster, both of which bodies zealously co-operated with them. Of the 1,800*l.* that had been early subscribed, he believed that at least 1,500*l.* had been contributed by the Presbytery of Antrim. Mr. Montgomery here read some extracts from the Trust Deed, to show the objects of the Fund, and the principle upon which it was intended it should be managed. A deputation, consisting of Mr. Mitchel, Mr. Blakeley, and himself, had visited England where they were received with the utmost kindness. The time was not very favourable for their object. England was engaged in a most important general Election, in the issue of which, the great measure of Parliamentary Reform was involved. Many of the individuals who were their warmest friends, had subscribed largely to a *Patriotic Fund* for promoting that measure. Another unfavourable circumstance was, the distress which then existed in parts of Ireland. The people of England had been appealed to; and the appeal was answered, especially by the Unitarians, in a manner that reflected the highest credit on them. There was also a fund raising for aiding the struggling Poles; and here again, the Unitarians were found in the van. The deputation were received in the kindest manner; and though they were able to visit

only comparatively few towns, he believed they should add, by their visit, nearly 1,000*l.* to the fund. There were many other places which they had not had time to visit, where they were told they would be cordially assisted if application would be made. He thought he had stated all that was of importance to communicate on this point; and he conceived, that they could not separate before passing a resolution expressive of their gratitude to their English Unitarian brethren. Mr. Montgomery then proceeded to mention the great exertions made by the Unitarian Dissenters of England for promoting their own interests; and said, the friends of religious liberty in this country must come forward to aid their own cause. They must contribute to swell the fund, They had to provide education for their young men. Young and feeble Congregations would require support and encouragement. The old and infirm Ministers, whose Congregations were small, must be assisted in the decline of life. He concluded by stating, that the five Ministers residing in Belfast, holding the principles of the Remonstrants, had contributed each 25*l.* This he mentioned merely to show, that they were in earnest in the matter. A general exertion must be made in all parts of Ireland. Already the subscriptions amounted to about 3,000*l.* He did not doubt, if a simultaneous movement were made, that 6,000*l.* or 8,000*l.* would be raised.

Mr. BLAKELY spoke in strong terms of the zeal and piety of the Unitarian Dissenters of England. He said, they were intimately acquainted with the proceedings of the Remonstrants. He stated several instances of the great liberality with which contributions had been made; and said, that he had received communications mentioning, that more subscriptions could be readily obtained.

As it was now twelve o'clock, the hour at which, according to an appointment of last Synod, Mr. Blakeley was to preach, the business of the Synod was adjourned. That Gentleman selected for his text the 3d verse of the General Epistle of Jude; "Beloved, when I give all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Mr. Blakely's sermon was principally taken up with discussing the doctrines of the Atonement, and the theories of the Trinity, as laid down by Trinitarian divines. It lasted for upwards of two hours, during which time the empassioned eloquence, extensive theological research, and accute reasoning of the Rev. gentleman completely fixed the attention of a very numerous and respectable auditory.

At three o'clock, the Synod resumed. When the minute of last year, relative to the case of Narrow-water Congregation, was read. Mr. Mitchel, Mr. Lunn, Mr. Davis, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Watson, and some others, spoke at considerable length, in explanation of the means that had been resorted to for the purpose of distracting that Congregation. They also stated what steps had been taken to counteract those measures. It appeared, that considerable expense had already been incurred by the Congregation in defence of their just rights; and it was suggested, that a subscription be entered into to assist in defraying that expense.

WM. KELLY BAYLEY, Esq., an Elder, thought the present a proper time for opening a list of subscriptions for that purpose. This opinion was adopted; and in a very short time a considerable sum was contributed.

It was agreed, that Banbridge be the place for holding the next annual meeting of Synod.

A memorial from a number of heads of families, from the Congregation of the Rev. Mr. Parke, Ballymoney, was read. Memorialists stated, that they had, for a considerable time, felt much inconvenience: that they could not conscientiously worship under Mr. Parke; and they had no opportunity of worshipping under a Minister whose sentiments they approved of. Towards Mr. Parke they entertained personal respect. They had stated to him their intentions in a friendly manner; and had parted from him without any feeling of dissatisfaction, except in as far as they held religious sentiments different from his. They therefore prayed, that they might be taken under the care of the Remonstrant Synod, and be supplied with preaching, until such time as they might be able to erect themselves into a Congregation, and obtain a stated pastor, under whose ministry they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Messrs. Dick and Getty appeared as Commissioners.

After a good deal of conversation, it was resolved, that the prayer of the memorial be granted.

Thursday, September 8.

The Synod met this morning, at seven o'clock, for transacting public business, when the Report of the Presbytery of Bangor was read, which contained nothing of particular observation except the case of Mr. Osborne, who had been formerly under the care of the Belfast Presbytery connected with the Synod of Ulster, and had been examined and approved of by the Synod's Theological Committee, so that he was ready to receive license from the Presbytery. Wishing to emancipate himself from the yoke which the Synod had lately imposed upon its Licentiates and Ministers, he applied to his Presbytery for credentials to enable him to put himself under the care of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor; but, though the Synod's Presbytery were willing to license him to preach the Gospel, had he continued in their connexion, they, without assigning any reason, refused the necessary testimonial on his own application, and did not condescend to answer a letter written to them on the subject, by the Moderator of the Presbytery to which he wished to attach himself. He had since been licensed by the Presbytery of Bangor, from their own personal knowledge of his highly respectable character and literary attainments.

A question having been put to the Synod, by the Presbytery of Bangor, respecting the course of theological study to be pursued by their Students after some conversation, it was resolved, that, until the Synod shall be able to appoint a professor of Theology for its own Students, it may be left to the option of the Students whether they shall undergo periodical examinations upon books to be prescribed to them by a Committee of the Synod, or attend lectures on Divinity in any of the established Seminaries.

The report of the Committee appointed at the last meeting to collect subscriptions in aid of the funds of the "Association for the Protection of the Rights of Conscience," was read, from which it appeared, that considerable Sums had been raised in Belfast, and its vicinity as well as in England.

It was then moved and unanimously agreed to,

That the thanks of the Synod are due to the inhabitants of Belfast and its neighbourhood, and also to the friends of civil and religious liberty in England, for the promptness with which they had answered the call made to them to aid this Society.

The Synod also pledged itself to use every exertion to forward the great object contemplated by the Association.

When the report of the Armagh Presbytery, and the Minute of last year respecting Warrenpoint Congregation, were read, Mr. NELSON briefly alluded to the Minute of the General Synod, and animadverted on the "management" of the affair by the Dromore Presbytery. It was moved and unanimously agreed to,

That this Synod highly approve of the conduct and zeal of the Presbytery of Armagh in this matter, and that they may be directed, under our fullest sanction, to continue taking such steps as may be necessary for the securing of the just rights of that much injured Congregation.

Mr. MONTGOMERY then moved the first Overture which was as follows: —

That this Synod respectfully propose to their much-esteemed brethren of the Synod of Munster and Presbytery of Antrim, to unite with them in the appointment of a Triennial Meeting of the Three Bodies, for the purpose of friendly counsel and co-operation, and the advancement of the great cause of Christian truth and Christian liberty, without, in any degree, trenching upon the established usages and jurisdiction of each body respectively.

Mr. PORTER seconded the motion.

Mr. N. ALEXANDER moved, as an amendment, that the Remonstrant Synod should submit to the Presbytery of Antrim, a proposal, that these two ecclesiastical bodies should be united, under whatever designation might be agreed upon.

His motion was not seconded.

Dr. LEDLIE expressed the pleasure which such a meeting as that contemplated in the Overture would afford to him individually, as a member of the Presbytery of Antrim: at the same time he was of opinion, that the Presbytery felt so happy in its present independent state, that it would not be willing to join the Remonstrant Synod in such a way as to give the Synod any jurisdiction over it.

The Overture was then unanimously agreed to, with the understanding, that the period of three years should not be insisted upon as the interval between the meetings, but that that should be left for the consideration of the Presbytery of Antrim and the Synod of Munster, when the proposition should be laid before them.

Mr. MONTGOMERY proceeded to move the second Overture:

That a respectful letter be written in the name of this Synod, to that illustrious stranger, *the Rajah Rammohun Roy*, of Bengal, congratulating him on his arrival in Britain, expressing our admiration of his splendid talents and attainments, our high satisfaction in his ascension to the cause of Christianity, our deep sense of his invaluable exertions for the diffusion of the Gospel, and the vindication of the rights of humanity in his native land; and assuring him, that without identifying ourselves as a Religious Association, with his peculiar views of Christian Doctrine, we should rejoice to see him in this country, and to receive him with all the respect and cordiality so justly due to his distinguished name, his philanthropic labours, and his unsullied reputation.

In moving this Overture, Mr. Montgomery took a hasty survey of the history of this illustrious stranger, so far as related to his conversion to Christianity, his adoption of Unitarianism, and the consequent violent opposition to his attempts at converting the Hindoos on the part of the Missionaries. Rammohun Roy belonged to the caste of Brahmins, of the highest class of his countrymen. Before he had become acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures, he had been convinced, from reading the sacred books of the Hindoos, that the views of his countrymen respecting a plurality of Gods, were erroneous, and unwarranted by their own books. He then published the opinions which he had taken up on mature deliberation, and made many converts among his countrymen to this new doctrine of the simple Unity of the Supreme Being. When, from the exercise of his own superior judgment, his mind had been thus prepared for the reception of a simple and a purer faith, a copy of the New Testament was put into his hands, he was perfectly enraptured with this blessed volume, and declared, that in it was contained the only true guide to peace on earth and immortal bliss hereafter. He then set about forming what might be called a Harmony of the four Gospels, in which he wrote out all the instructions delivered by our blessed Lord during his sojourn upon earth, in the order in which they were uttered. This volume he published, both in Bengalee and Hindostanee, and disseminated widely among his countrymen, under the title of *The precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Happiness and Immortality*. But no sooner had this most valuable work been published, than its celebrated author was attacked by Doctor Marshman, then at the head of the Missionary establishments in India, for not having embodied in his book what he called the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. Did it not, however, seem indeed most strange, that these peculiar doctrines should not be contained in the sermons and instructions of our blessed Lord to his Disciples? The Rajah, in his work, used only the very words employed by our Saviour himself; and if they do not convey these peculiar doctrines, where are they to be found in Scripture? This first attack of Doctor Marshman called forth from the learned Brahmin what he has denominated his *First Appeal*. He was then attacked a second time, after which he published his *Second Appeal*. And being once more attacked by this zealous supporter of Orthodoxy, he gave to the world his celebrated *Third Appeal*. In order to make himself intimately acquainted with the sacred writings both of the Old and New Testaments, he had, in the mean time, studied, with great success, the Hebrew and Greek languages. But it was not only as a zealous supporter of Unitarian Christianity, that Rammohun Roy demanded their admiration. He was the friend of humanity; and to his exertion, and to his great influence as a man of wealth and of a most enlightened mind, more was owing, than to all the exertions of the British Government, towards putting an end to the abominable practice of burning widows on the funeral piles of their husbands. Taking all these circumstances into account, should they forego the favourable opportunity afforded by his visit to England, of expressing the high sense they entertained of his transcendent talents and his invaluable labours in

the great cause in which he is embarked, and of declaring the gratification it would afford them if he should visit their shores? He knew that this act of theirs would be assailed and misrepresented by those Orthodox publications, which have not been ashamed to publish to the world the worst calumnies on the character of this illustrious inhabitant of the East. Let the Synod not, however, on this account be deterred from performing their duty: but let it not be supposed, that by this step, they identified their views of Christian truth with those which he had laid down in his works. On the contrary, it was more than probable, that not a single member of this Synod agreed with him on every point; still, however, his talents demanded their most cordial admiration.

Mr. PORTER, in seconding this Overture, referred to the effect which the doctrine of the Trinity had in deterring Rammohun Roy from embracing Christianity, and stated, that, for a considerable period, the Rajah could not be induced to read the Scriptures, being under the impression, that that doctrine was the fundamental principle which they contained. Having laid aside this prejudice, and having found in them no countenance of such a doctrine, he at once embraced them as the only rule of faith, and the only guide to peace and happiness. Mr. Porter mentioned, that even Doctor Marshman bore the most ample testimony to the social character of the Rajah; but such was the cry raised against him by the Missionaries, that no printing press in Calcutta would print his works, and he was obliged to establish one at his own expense, for the purpose of publishing his writings.

Mr. MONTGOMERY next proposed the third Overture. The libellous accusation and unfounded calumnies referred to in the Overture, were contained in a letter written, in the name of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, by the Moderator of that Body to the Synod of Ulster. The malicious calumny, that the Remonstrants deny the Lord that bought them, has resounded from the one end of this Island to the other, but that it should have found its way across the Atlantic, and been believed by our brethren in America, are circumstances truly astonishing.

That in a letter from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, addressed to the General Synod of Ulster, and published in the minutes of that Synod for this year, the following paragraph occurs:—"We congratulate you on the all-important change which has lately taken place in your body, freeing you from those who deny the only Lord God and Redeemer Jesus Christ, so that now, in the unity of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, you will be able to live in the bonds of peace:" that as the libellous, unfounded, and unchristian reflections contained in this paragraph, can only have reference to the Remonstrants constituting this Synod, a Committee be appointed, to draw up a refutation of the insulting calumny, and to transmit it, with a solemn remonstrance, to the General Assembly of Presbyterians in America.

Mr. GLENDY, in seconding this Overture, made some observations on the spirit which the Synod had uniformly manifested towards their Remonstrant brethren, and on the species of peace which must prevail in a Body in which Calvinist is joined with Arminian, and both with several Unitarians.

The motion was then carried unanimously.

The **MODERATOR** then returned the thanks of the Synod to Dr. Ledlie and the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, for their kindness in granting the use of their House for the Meeting of Synod, and for their attention to the members during its sitting.

Dr. **LEDLIE** expressed himself much gratified at the honour which he conceived the Remonstrant Synod had done him and his Congregation by meeting in Larne.

A Committee was then appointed to watch over the civil rights of the Remonstrants; after which, the Synod was concluded by the Moderator, with prayer, at about two o'clock.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Synod were met, at dinner, by a large number of the most respectable and influential inhabitants of Larne and its vicinity; and the evenings were spent in the interchange of sentiments of liberality and mutual kindness.

The Rev. John Scott Porter, minister of Carter's Lane Congregation, in London, has been unanimously invited to become colleague to the Rev. William Bruce, in the First Congregation Belfast, and has accepted the call.

It would ill become us not to take some notice of the departure of one of our steadiest friends, Miss Hannah Parker, who died in the month of August: and yet so little remarkable is there in the retirement of private life, that we can only state the high estimation in which she was held by a numerous acquaintance, for her many valuable qualities, and for none more than for her thorough knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and her fearless advocacy of the same on all occasions: of this our readers will require no further proof than reference to the excellent Letter written by her, contained in volume 1, page 565, &c., where will be found some particulars relating to the formation of her opinions.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Second Letter of a Student of Moral Philosophy, in reply to Erasmus, did not reach us until the 26th of September. It was then too late to receive new articles, particularly one which would have required so much room. It will appear in our next, and we hope will close the controversy. Our correspondent Melancthon, will we think, commend our impartiality in inserting his censure.-- We agree with him in spirit, but could give many reasons to justify any severity that has been used.

We regret, that Erasmus, should have conceived that he "had just cause of offence," in our note to correspondents, in our last number. We can assure him, very sincerely, that we did not intend to speak in any way inconsistently with the perfect respect which we have always entertained towards him, or to insinuate that he was an enemy to "the cultivation of the female mind."

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VOL. II.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

REVIEW OF "A LETTER TO A LITERARY LADY."

SIR,—Erasmus avows, whether wisely or not, his readers, after perusing his letter on the danger of metaphysics as a study for ladies, and my remarks upon it, are left to judge, that, "he is no metaphysician." The amount of this confession, of which I hold it right the female part of the community be distinctly apprized, is that mental science has never been the object of his study, and, by consequence, that he is about as ignorant of the doctrines promulgated under that name, as the persons for whom he writes generally are of geometry. Yet, though conscious of his state, and convinced that any thing he should say upon the subject would clearly recal it to many or all into whose hands his letter should fall, he decided to write on. Such conduct, when manifested in the ordinary affairs of life, receives the name of infatuation, which never fails to subject a man to the forfeiture of his character for discretion. It may be the opinion of our author, either that his style and incidental reflections would compensate for the poverty of his science, or that any body, at a moment's warning, may prove himself an intellectual and moral philosopher, just as not a few have thought, while working at the loom or the bench, that they were qualified to stand forth to the world in the capacity of divines. In short, Erasmus, like these persons, may think he has got a *call*, or that he is a genius, capable of creating, when powerfully heated at his own fire-side, the knowledge which men of inferior gifts can attain only by patient and long-continued study of themselves, and attentive observation of others. But suppositions are endless—the plain matter of fact is, that he has written on the science of mind, in a tone of un-

usual boldness, and displayed the utmost contempt for some of the proudest names in the annals of philosophy, without knowing more about it than a lad in his third month of the logic class. That he may not be mistaken by some of his readers, whose good nature may be in danger of causing them to translate the statement "I am no metaphysician," into "a modest way of rating his acquisitions," I shall make it my business to relieve him of all suspicion of disingenuousness, by exhibiting an illustration or two of his want of metaphysical knowledge.

In the meantime, I cannot refrain from glancing at the motive, as stated by himself, which gave rise to the above confession—a prudent one as he terms it, viz: the certainty that his ignorance would soon obtrude itself on the reader's notice. "My dear madam," says he, "I think it prudent to premise, that I am no metaphysician, *because* you will soon discover that." From this we are obviously to infer, that had it been possible to secure the fair correspondent's belief in his competency *after* trying the experiment of warning her against the dangers of her late and prospective studies, though consciousness kept continually whispering the real truth of his case, he would have considered it prudent *not* to premise any thing about his deficiency—in short, passed himself off as a right clever metaphysician. If the "because," which figures in his loving address to the Literary Lady, were designed to convey meaning to her ear, it would seem to be that at which we have, perhaps, somewhat wickedly hinted. But to lay aside what may be deemed hypercritical, and look over the morality of giving an opinion where the means for judging are not enjoyed, an act, which may be pardoned, as perhaps intended to approximate the modern to as near a resemblance as possible of the ancient Erasmus, in elegant artifice, we proceed to observe, that the learned lady is, indeed, very "soon" called upon to see verified a confession, which she might otherwise have taken for an instance of her friend's genuine humility and even deference to herself. For, on turning the little leaf of the Bible Christian, the following notable assertion meets her—"The visionary notion of Plato, concerning ideas, amused the heathen philosophers and christian divines, and even tinctured the philosophy

of Locke. Berkeley availed himself of it to disprove the existence of the external world, and Hume to deny the existence of spirits or minds." All this is more than commonly felicitous; for I doubt, if it would have been in his power, by almost any thing else he could assert, to satisfy us so completely of the good faith in which he made his initiatory confession. There is not a word of truth in the two sentences. "The visionary notion of Plato, concerning ideas," did *not* "amuse the heathen philosophers and christian divines," it was *seriously entertained* by them, as much so, as the no less visionary notions of Dr. Reid are entertained and defended by Erasmus; for I hope he is perfectly serious when he says, or prays "that his soul may dwell with the doctor's common sense." Did not a multitude of the ancient philosophers profess themselves the disciples of Plato, as did others Aristotle's; and do not the records of the church, those precious receptacles of all that is delectable in humanity, demonstrate that Platonism made its appearance early in the writings of the most distinguished of its members? That "the philosophy of Locke was tinged with the visionary notion" of the Grecian sage, is an affirmation betraying an ignorance either of the nature of Plato's notion, or of Locke's philosophy, or, more properly, of both. What is the notion concerning ideas ascribed to Plato? That they are "eternal and immutable," and that "men in a pre-existent state, having been put in possession of them, bring them with them on their introduction into this world." A cheap easy way of getting knowledge you see; and if real, I should be obliged to take back all that I have ventured to say about Erasmus' deficiencies, as according to Plato's doctrines, every head or soul must be originally filled and filled alike, so that the letter writer's must have its due quantum of metaphysical lore, if he could but get at it. But to the point—is Locke's philosophy tinged with this visionary notion concerning ideas? Why, Locke, John Locke, in his Essay on the Human Understanding, expressly and formally wrote against it, and is rightly supposed by—every body, I had rashly thought, but now find an exception in Erasmus—to be the first who effectually overthrew it. I will not Mr. Editor, waste your pages, in exposing the absurdity of the assertion as it refers to Berkeley and Hume.

But I cannot refuse the opportunity to observe, that it evinces a striking, a shameless disregard of public opinion, in the author, to assume to himself the right of schooling and terrifying the ladies with respect to the dangers of metaphysics, at the very moment he is so utterly a stranger to the most common and leading books published on the subject, and which are in the hands, I trust, of nearly all who have received a liberal, by which I mean, a philosophic, education.

The above is part only of what must be said of "Plato's visionary notion concerning ideas." I have to mention, what should make even Erasmus stare, at all events, what cannot fail to excite surprise in those whom he presumes to instruct—Erasmus is himself a Platonist! He has imbibed the visionary notion against which he so anxiously guards others, and which he falsely attributes to Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, and by availing themselves of which, he says, they were conducted to the rejection of both matter and spirits. I have explained the visionary notion, in question, and I think it justly designated—these, then, are the words of our modern censor of philosophers—"The ideas of right and wrong are eternal and immutable," i. e. our ideas of course, for we know nothing of any other beings. Now, I expect it will be granted me, that ideas are not things separate from the mind, like chairs, books, &c., but simply affections of the mind. If simply affections of the mind, then, the mind must be as old, at least, as its ideas, and not a whit less changeable. But, "the ideas of right and wrong are eternal and immutable," ergo, the mind also is eternal and immutable. No trick here, Erasmus. All is fair and above board. Alas! alas! into what follies will not rashness bring us! We are silly creatures after all. Ladies! ponder well, ere you believe one of us; above all, ponder, before you adopt the opinions of your somewhat indiscreet, tho' no doubt kind-hearted friend; for, in good earnest, they seem to me to plunge us into this startling conclusion, that the human mind is equal to that of the Creator's; if there be any necessity to seek for a creator, after having invested man with the attributes of eternity and immutability. Another instance to our purpose, is found in the strange account of the ideal theory, alluded to in my last, and presented to her literary ladyship, on turn-

ing the next tiny leaf, where Locke, Clarke, and Newton, are not only said to have adopted that theory, but where Newton is called a great metaphysician, and mentioned as incapable of detecting the fallacy which lurked in Hume's demonstration of the non-existence of spiritual substances. It will occasion no surprise, tho' Erasmus should after this help Miss Edgeworth to an additional Bull, by gravely telling us that Noah acted as assistant gardener to Adam. To show, I have not intentionally misrepresented the author, I quote his words—"The ideal theory was adopted by Locke" (not true) "taken for granted by Clarke and Newton," (not true) "and assumed as the basis of their reasoning by Berkely and Hume." (Not correct, Berkely and Hume did not *assume*, but *prove*, as they thought, at least, the justness of the theory, and that in the most elaborate manner.) "By its means, the one demonstrated, that there was no external world," (i. e. observe, by means of the theory which consists in the denial of an external world, the one demonstrated, that there was no external world!) "but only visions in our minds—Minds! says Hume, where do you find minds? You can no more prove the existence of minds than of bodies. There is nothing but ideal pictures." (imaginary nonsense) "He accordingly proceeded to demonstrate, that there was no spiritual substance in the world; I say, demonstrated, for so it was; those great metaphysicians, Clarke and Newton, could find no flaw in the argument, till Reid discovered the fallacy." This passage is, in all respects, worthy the author of the former one. We need not inquire whether the ladies will now be ready to understand the "prudent confession" of their adviser, literally.

The next attack on mental science, deserving of notice, is that directed against the doctrines of the association of ideas, and of necessity. Thus,—“We are further instructed by these “modern philosophers,” that we have no power over our own thoughts or actions, that our ideas are carried along by an irresistible and “indissoluble current of associations; and our actions governed by *motives*, which we can neither *reject*, *controul*, or *modify*.” Would the author be good enough to inform us if any consideration *not* acted upon, i. e. “*rejected*,” can be called a motive. Is not that always denominated a *motive* which influenced to action? This

is the notion which I have constantly had of the word motive, and if it be correct, it is absurd to speak of rejecting a motive. The consideration that is rejected, in consequence of the suggestion of another, is no motive. Again, what is meant by "controlling" motives? Two roads conduct to a place which I wish to reach—the idea rises that one of them is shorter and better kept than the other, and I prefer it. What can be meant by controlling the idea, just mentioned, which was the motive that induced me to select one of the roads? That I could have prevented the idea from arising? He would be a stranger to himself that would say so. That when it did rise, I could dismiss it? Who is so silly, as to suppose, he can forget or remember when he likes? Again, what is intended to be conveyed by the phrase "modifying motives"?—what by modifying the above idea of the road? How complacently some people can speak and write their crudities!

Instead of explaining the received doctrine of the association of ideas, for which I have obviously no space, and no need, in order to remove the impression made by the above blundering observation, I shall simply ask, Erasmus, if, when he thinks of taking his tea, he can help thinking of a cup being used to serve it up to him; or when he sees a bottle of wine on his table at dinner, he can help thinking of the use to which it is usually put; or, lastly, if on hearing a man declare Dr. Clarke, Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Locke, to have been orthodox in their views of christianity, he can help thinking the man ill-informed? These questions are conceived better adapted to vindicate the doctrines of "modern philosophers" respecting the association of ideas than any arguments I could employ. Indeed they render all arguments unnecessary. The simple statement of the truth, with regard to the mind, is uniformly found to effect conviction.

Then, as to the views held by the same philosophers on the subject of the Will, Erasmus is right in saying that they all terminate in necessity, i. e. they terminate in the conclusion, that human thought and action are guided by laws not less settled and ascertainable than are the laws acknowledged to govern physical nature. If Erasmus will call this necessity "fatal" it cannot be helped, but I regret he is so careless in the use of

language; for, instead of its having any thing in it fatal to religion and morals, I consider it eminently favourable to both. Every believer in a God is a necessitarian. Every one, who promises himself success in communicating knowledge upon any one subject to a fellow creature, is a necessitarian. The fact is, all men are practically necessitarians, and they would be so also speculatively, if they understood what necessity is. Moreover, till its truth be acknowledged, rational, consistent opinions on ethics and theology will never prevail among men, nor will that charity which the gospel inculcates, the temper which thousands commend, but few exemplify. I must add, however, that I despair of seeing the doctrine of necessity generally embraced, so long as so small a number devote a portion of their time to the study of mental philosophy, and so many, like the present writer, exert themselves with all the energy which ancient and carefully cherished prejudices can inspire, to bring it into public disrepute. But blessed be God, such prejudices tho' long lived are not immortal. He has provided for their ultimate extinction, in the mortality of their victims. In the graves of every successive generation, some one prejudice or another is laid to molest and defeat the best wishes of the enlightened philanthropist no more—a fact which holds out the prospect, cheering, tho' distant, that the day of the disenthralment of the human mind will come.

Against the doctrines of which we have now spoken, the ladies are earnestly warned to be on their guard. The warning I trust will be considered deserving or undeserving of their attention, just as the doctrine to which it points appears, on due reflection, true or false. Has Erasmus advanced any thing to prove it false, or to cast a shadow of suspicion on its truth? Nothing. Nor can he; and more, nor would he, if he knew of what he writes. Is it his wish, that the ladies regard the the doctrine, before understanding it, or knowing the principles on which it is defended, as meriting their aversion, simply because he chooses without rhyme or reason to pronounce it “fatal?” We hope, that, unaccustomed as he is, as we have shown he is, to philosophic investigation, he entertains more respect for the female mind, and that of his fellow creatures generally, than to desire them to repose *implicit* confi-

dence in the opinion of any man, even tho' that man should be himself. He may, however, think, that they are presented in his letter with more than his word to warrant them to view with aversion the doctrine under consideration. Let us hear him then. "Whatever contrivances," he says, "ingenious men may fall upon, they" (opinions leading to necessity) "must, as generally understood, produce the most mischievous effects on the conduct of mankind." "As generally understood"—I am not aware that the doctrine of philosophic necessity, which, be it carefully noticed, is a very different thing from the predestination of the theologian, and the fatalism of the half informed heathen philosopher, even as understood by those who have paid but a partial attention to it, has ever been productive of a single bad consequence, i. e. has ever betrayed them into practices hurtful to themselves or others. The writer expresses himself strongly upon the point. The opinions terminating in fatal necessity, "must" he affirms, "produce," not one or two evils, and those of a slight kind, but "the most mischievous effects on the conduct of mankind." Now, it is exceedingly easy to say all this, as it is for the Tories of the present all critical juncture, to assert that our country must be ruined the moment its government is wrested from their hands; but a far more cogent way let me tell Erasmus of convincing us of the truth of his position than this *musting*, which does not sound very well in the mouth of a mathematician, would have been to adduce a few instances of the "mischievous effects" of the doctrine "as generally understood." The *musts* of writers on human nature, and indeed, on all subjects, save that of mathematics, ought to be cautiously received. Very commonly they are introduced when facts are wanting. But possibly the phrase "as generally understood" is intended to denote imperfectly or even erroneously understood: if so, I *must* say, the remark was not worth the author's while, because what doctrine so understood, has not been turned to mischievous purposes? The very "grace" of the gospel, Erasmus cannot but know, from his familiarity with the scriptures, and his high estimation of them, he having recommended to the ladies "drawing from the well that springeth up into everlasting life," in preference to the studying of the mind, has been so perverted.

It is not unworthy of remark, in this place, that most men in opposing the truths of intellectual or moral science are found, when closely watched, frequently to argue, unconsciously of course, on the very principles which, at the time, they imagine themselves successfully controverting. This undersigned corroboration of the truth is exemplified by our author. Driven to his shifts in railing against the doctrine of necessity, he flies into the arms of his adversary. In short, we mean to show that Erasmus is a necessitarian, as we before showed amid his horror of idealism, that he is a Platonist. Thus—"the ideas of free agency and responsibility are naturally and *necessarily associated* in the human mind." This is no doubt attempting to establish the freedom of our thoughts by insisting that they are, by the strictest necessity, what they are: but no matter for that, I am not trying to prove Erasmus logical in his reasoning, but merely to put his female readers in possession of the fact, that he is at bottom, without knowing it, a necessitarian. That he may himself have some chance of seeing this, we beg to state, that *all* ideas, whatever be their kind, found in a state of association, are alike "naturally and necessarily" associated in the human mind; and that upon this fact depends the truth of the doctrine about which he is so little a philosopher as to feel alarmed. He himself admits one necessity, and we assure him, there are not two kinds of it; and if he ponder the grounds of his own, he will not fail to discover that their amplitude is much greater than he, at present, by reason of a zeal not according to knowledge, apprehends. Besides, had he been duly apprized of the present state of the controversy concerning the Will, he would no sooner have seen the words which we have quoted from him in black before him, than the conviction that he was playing into his enemy's hands would have flashed on his mind. But so it is, that, in relation to the whole question as it now stands, he is absolutely blind. Several passages might be cited to prove this melancholy fact,—the following is as good as a thousand.—"By learning to think, that their actions are independent of their wills, or that their wills are governed by an irresistible influence, men are relieved from all sense of guilt, and fear of punishment. When convinced, that their

conduct and destiny have no connexion, and are equally independent of their exertions, they must conceive, that their actions would be matters of indifference, though they were subject to their direction, and will suppress all anxiety about what they could neither foresee nor prevent." I presume our author is aware, that however logical one's reasoning may be, if the premises from which it starts be false, it is good for nothing. It is one thing to argue logically, and another to argue soundly. Logical, Erasmus is, in the concatenation of the above propositions, but most egregiously unsound. His premises are all botheration. No body, now, maintains, that "men's actions are independent of their wills:" on the contrary, it is insisted, they are as dependent on their wills as effects, in every instance, are, (and an action is an effect,) on their causes. No body that has not been sleeping, or born only these ten years, contends that men's wills are governed by an irresistible influence," meaning by that "influence" something over and above the will. No body, except old prejudiced varlets that will not exert themselves to keep up with the improvement of the age, and who continue thrum, thrumming over the topics of their great grandfathers, and in the very words of these venerables too, insists, that "men's conduct and destiny," (meaning by this imposing term, "destiny," their future happiness or suffering, which is the only idea I can attach to it, I not being a fatalist, which from his fondness for this term, Erasmus may turn out to be,) "have no connexion, and are equally independent of their exertions." No such rank absurdities are pleaded for by any necessitarian, even of the old school of mental philosophy, and far less any one versed in the approved philosophy of the present day. All this ought to have been known to the writer before entering on his, no doubt, well meant labours for the sex. The only point contested now, if, indeed, it can be said to be contested, is, what the term Will shall be considered as denoting. Does it denote thoughts or ideas of a certain class, i. e. thoughts or ideas of a class which are immediately and invariably succeeded by bodily movements, or something not coming under the designation of thought or idea? This is the only point upon the subject in which modern inquirers interest themselves, and the former of the two views just men-

tioned, is that which prevails, I may say, universally among them. Now, as all ideas rise agreeably to the laws of association, which laws cannot be *conceived* as dependent upon us, it follows, that the *necessary* association insisted upon by Erasmus, preposterously insisted upon by him, we admit, is an acknowledgment of the very doctrines of necessity of which he speaks in terms of such unsparing reprobation.

It would be exceedingly easy to make a satisfactory answer to the questions thrown together in the following manner at the close of his observations on this doctrine. Speaking of necessity, he says,—“Again, if this be the case, why are we suffered to be perplexed and distressed about the future, and to feel remorse for the past? Why do we desire to do good? Why are we sorry for having done evil? (part of the first question repeated) “and study to avoid it in time to come? In short, there is not a principle or feeling of our souls, that does not revolt against such an idea. Above all, why are we placed in a state of trial, if we have neither power to act nor fortitude to suffer? Lastly, how completely does this doctrine confound all our notions of a future state. As it would be absurd to call this a state of trial, it would be equally so, to call the world to come a scene of retribution; for where are the good actions, for which we can merit reward, and how can the movements of a machine be deserving of punishment?” This array of interrogation appeared, I have not the slightest doubt, to its author, a perfect demonstration of the truth of the doctrine, for which, owing to the confined range of his intellectual studies, he has formed so decided a predilection; and I should not wonder that it has operated in a similar manner on the minds of many of his readers. In such a publication as this, I can do no more than attempt to indicate a reply to each of the questions.

1. “Why,” (on the supposition the doctrine of necessity is true,) “are we suffered to be perplexed and distressed about the future, and to feel remorse for the past?” Why, we ask, in reply, are we suffered, on the doctrine of Free Agency, to be perplexed and distressed about the future, and to feel remorse for the past? Because, says the Libertarian, we believe we might have acted otherwise than we did. Show me

an action—I do not say of man only,—but of beast, of angel, or of God, of which it can be rationally affirmed, it could have been done otherwise, even the most minute particular connected with it, and I give up the point. There is, and can be, no such action. In the supposition of such an action, there is involved the most palpable absurdity, viz. that a cause can exist, and its effects not follow. When you say, you might have acted otherwise, you mean, placed in your present circumstances you would act differently; for, placed in your former circumstances, you would be just as you were when you acted so and so. And why would you act differently now from what you did before? Just because you have views now, motives, prospects, different from what you had before, *i. e.* the cause now is different from what it was when you acted. Well, this seems plain enough; but, why be perplexed and distressed, since the action could not, in the circumstances, but happen? Mark the answer, it is not the action which perplexes and distresses you, it is the present and future effects of it alone. But for these, the action would give you no more concern than the last wink of your eye-lashes. But the Libertarian still plies us with—why do distressing effects arise from actions, which, at the moment of their commission, we could not help performing? We answer, you have changed the question of discussion; your present inquiry relates not to necessity, but to the divine goodness. However, we shall not blink it, because every subject runs into every other subject, and there is nothing isolated in the universe. The inquiry last made virtually resolves itself into the following: why do we feel pain on thrusting our finger into the fire, since, in our circumstances, we could not avoid doing so? To which we respond, that such is the constitution of our physical frame, and that of fire, that when thus brought into contact, pain is the necessary consequence, and that, *mark particularly*, if the one or the other, or both, were altered, so as to do away with this effect, you would lose far more than you would gain; while finally, the pain has *necessarily* the effect of guarding us against coming into the same circumstances. A burnt child, you know, dreads the fire. All pain resulting from volition has a tendency to destroy itself. In proportion as men become enlightened, their knowledge

decreases, and that necessarily, the possibility of voluntary evil, *i. e.* vice, or sin.

2. "Why do we desire to do good?" It was a favourite, and of course, oft repeated, advice of a venerable clergyman of the church of Scotland, lately deceased—"Be gud, and du gud, *and gud wull come o' ye.*" The Rev. Mr. Adams' advice will fit me here for an answer. The reader will perceive that old Adams was a *moderate*; the Evangelicals are scared from giving such wholesome advice by their bug-bear, orthodoxy.

3. "Why are we sorry for having done evil, and study to avoid it in time to come?" I fear the right answer to this question will not be understood; it is this,—Sorrow for evil done, is nothing more—if the evil, the despair be confined to ourselves—than ideas of pains looked forward to as the necessary consequence of the past action; or, if the action affect others, it is ideas of pains looked forward to as necessarily to fall upon us through their agency. Take away both of these sets of ideas, and you destroy the sorrow; they and the sorrow are one. You might as well, therefore, ask me, why do we see the consequences of any particular action, as "why are we sorry for having done evil?" If we can agree about the word "evil," as signifying pain, greater or less as may be, we are wholly agreed.

Next,—“Why do we study to avoid the evil in time to come?” By the recollection of it as evil, and in no other way. Remember the child and the fire. To take, however, another example,—I called you a scoundrel, for which action—for words are actions—you knocked me down. The idea of the knocking down, prevents me ever after from calling you, and perhaps any body else, a scoundrel. This is surely plain enough.

4. "Above all, why are we placed in a state of trial, if we have neither power to act nor fortitude to suffer?" The author must explain what he means by being "placed in a state of trial." This is one of the common-places in dogmatic theology, often repeated, but never expounded. I suspect that it was a parable also, and not any facts in nature which ran in his head when he put down this question. At any rate, I will not attempt an answer, till I clearly perceive the import of the terms of the question.

With regard to our "neither having power to act, nor fortitude to suffer," we deny that any man ever represented us in this miserable plight. Erasmus is perplexed here, as we have often seen him before, through a want of knowledge of his subject. The word "power" is, at present, the source of his embarrassment, and as we have not time to extricate him, we content ourselves with handing him over to Dr. Brown, the ablest physician we know, in treating all disorders of the intellect arising from ignorance of Cause and Effect. Let the author read with care the Doctor's book, and we have no fears that he will be in the least at a loss to apprehend how a man may be a necessary agent and yet possess all the power to act and fortitude to suffer, of which we can form any idea; and more of either he cannot well desire.

5. "Lastly, how completely does this doctrine confound all our notions of a future state." It is very likely, for there is no subject upon which so many gratuitous notions have been formed. Till I hear the notions, therefore, entertained by Erasmus and others concerning a future state, I will not allow the fact that the doctrine of necessity confounds them, to be set down as an objection to that doctrine. For this good reason, that the clearest and most important truth, and indeed, I account necessity such, may be liable to be rejected by every one who can allege against it, that it confounds all his notions of a certain kind. Before dismissing this last of his array of questions, I crave leave to submit two brief remarks, not altogether unimportant, to the attention of the individual on whose production I have been commenting. The first is, that we know more of the real nature of the human mind than we do, or can know of a future state. The second is, that we never should reason *from* the future *to* the present or the past; or, in other words, we should never bring our notions of the world to come to determine, or even, in the slightest degree, to affect questions relating to the present world. Such a mode of reasoning is like bringing a rushlight to disclose to us the invisible properties of an object that is exposed to the blaze of the meridian sun.

The following piece of reasoning concludes this portion of the author's letter:—"As it would be absurd to call this a state of trial, it would be equally so to call the world to come a scene of retribution; for, where

are the good actions for which we can *merit reward*, and how can the *movements* of a *machine* be deserving of punishment? Slang is one of the most formidable enemies in existence to human improvement. Slang, what is slang? some one asks. Why, sir, slang, keeping off the nimble-fingered tribe, is language constantly used on certain subjects, religious, political, and literary, without any definite ideas being attached to it in the minds of those from whose lips or pens it chances to drop. Slang is, vox et preterea nihil. You hear it every Sunday from the pulpit, and every day in the week from almost all who lecture you on religion, government, literature, and the fine arts. Blackguards employ it to conceal their knavery, the would-be-wise to conceal their ignorance. Hardly is there an advantage enjoyed by man to which some one or other of the evils which prey upon his interest may not be traced, and the evil of which we now complain, is referable to that command over mere words that the prevailing systems of education are chiefly adapted to give. Taught words before he knows things, it is not surprising that the former should pass with him for more value than they really possess. After reading his honest declaration, "I am no Metaphysician," it would have been unreasonable in me to expect Erasmus to be exempt from the fault of which I have just spoken. Had it appeared in the garb of oratory, its most accustomed attire, I should have passed it over as intended for the ladies, but assuming, as it does, the dress of reason, and pointing against one of the most important doctrines of mental science, it is my duty to expose it.

The slang terms on which the drift of the author's reasoning turns, in the above sentences, I have marked with a different type. These terms, it will be in the remembrance of the reader, are constantly in the mouths of the opponents of necessity, who seem to think their very sound, argument enough to secure a triumph. Now, I beg to ask Erasmus, as, in the meantime, representing this tribe of *sound* philosophers, if he will pardon a very weak pen, what he intends to express by the word *merit*, employed, as it here is, in reference to "the world to come"? Does he intend to intimate that everlasting life and felicity can be made out on the principle of Free Agency, as a *right*, which the being, enjoying, and rightly using, that Free Agency, can

demand from the justice of the Supreme? If he does not intend it to intimate this idea, it is brought forward on the present occasion, for no conceivable purpose whatever. If he does intend it to intimate this idea, then, I ask him to show the slightest connexion, I do not say, between the imperfect virtue of the best men that ever breathed, only, but the most exalted moral excellence ever displayed by any being he chooses to mention, not interdicting his ascent to Heaven, and his choice of the highest archangel, and the claim upon Divinity to eternal blessedness. Between virtue, even the humblest, and present happiness of a certain degree of intensity, I see, to express myself according to received usage, an obvious connexion; but in fact, when properly understood, these terms, virtue and happiness, denote the same thing. But between my consulting my present happiness, which is virtue, and the independent author of existence continuing mine, and making it a happy existence, I see none whatever. If God do prolong my being and render it happy, even as happy as it is now, I shall not only be pleased, but I shall thank him and praise him for so doing, as I am disposed to thank and praise him for having bestowed the living constitution of which I now consist. Not a murmur would escape my lips, and if I were a much better man than I am, or ever expect to be, it seems to me, at present, that I should be more disposed to acquiesce in this act of Deity. Erasmus will see, then, first, that I am not so outrageously ambitious as some humble creatures who, at least, agree to call themselves saints, and who contemplate Heaven as a place where they are to be raised above all their neighbours; and second, that I scout the idea of merit altogether,—not, let him carefully mark, however, on the ridiculous principle, on which most theologians scout it, viz: that man is so debased as not to be able to do a good action; hand a chair, for instance, to a wretch ready to faint with fatigue; or think a right thought, for that would prove him also incapable of doing a bad action, or thinking a wrong thought; in fact, it would prove him no moral responsible agent at all, as responsibility necessarily implies the possession of something esteemed good; but simply, because no conceivable link of connexion exists between the most perfect *present* virtue and the claim to a prolongation of life and enjoyment after the

close of this present earthly scene—a claim implied in the very idea of merit. In the estimation of genuine philosophy, a happy immortality, when conferred, will be, on the part of the giver, a pure act of grace. Some people cant about the pride of philosophy, and still more about the humility of its ill-instructed and empty-headed opposers; but, if the truth were known, the humility would be found all with the former, and the the pride with the latter. Let us now look at the second slang word in the above specimen of reasoning—"How," asks Erasmus, "can the *movements* of a *machine* be deserving of punishment?" It is nonsense to talk of a machine deserving punishment, and still greater nonsense, if possible, to talk of its movements deserving punishment. Thus far, then, we agree. But where is the resemblance between man, a necessary agent, and a machine? It lies in the movements of both, and the springs of those movements being regulated by fixed determinate laws. Agreed again. Is there no other resemblance between them? No. Well, then, it is not entirely on account of this resemblance that man, the necessary agent, is punished; and machine, the necessary agent, is not punished. What is the *difference* between man, the necessary agent, and machine, the necessary agent? The difference is, that the former is living, can be made to have pain, can conceive it, after he has had it, and, as a justification of neglecting it, can be induced, in consequence of the prospect of being made to feel it, to alter his conduct; while the latter is—I shall not, by consulting Ure's Dictionary, pretend to be more knowing than I am—wood, or brass, or iron. Now, Erasmus, if you could make out, that in the world to come, a human necessary agent *must* be composed of wood, brass, or iron, and nothing else, (and perhaps, with the help of Edward of London, of notorious popularity, you might manage so far as to get up a sect,) I admit, that his "*movements*" could never be deserving of punishment.

I designed to set Erasmus right in some of his remarks on Cause and Effect, and also to touch upon the method according to which Mental and Moral Philosophy is taught, but cannot execute my purpose at present.

LETTERS TO THE PRESBYTERIANS OF IRELAND.

No. IV.

(Continued from page 368.)

BRETHREN,—I resume my Address to those of you who sincerely believe the doctrines, usually denominated *Orthodox*. As conscientious men, you merit respect—as worthy men, whom I consider to be in error, I am anxious for your instruction. In my last Letter, I pointed out the danger of rejecting the exercise of reason, in matters of faith—the absurdity of trusting to ancestral wisdom, or human authority—the culpability and danger of taking up our religion without due inquiry—and the strong probability, that the great majority of you have neither properly investigated the scriptural claims of those doctrines which you profess, nor of those which you condemn. I then promised, “to endeavour to assist you in the attainment of more correct views, both with regard to Church Government and Doctrine.” That promise, I shall now endeavour to fulfil.

The word *Church*, in Scripture, sometimes means a particular worshipping society, and sometimes the whole body of believers; but, in its ordinary acceptation, at present, it implies any number of Christians or Christian Societies, co-operating for mutual support and edification, in matters of religion. Thus, we hear of the Church of Rome, the Church of England, the Church of Geneva, or of the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Unitarian Church, and many others. Now, the subject to which I particularly desire to direct your attention, is the nature and extent of the authority which any Church is justifiable in exercising over the various Societies in connexion with it, and over the individual members constituting those Societies. Have all churches, or has any church, “a right to decree modes of faith, and forms of worship,” and to demand submission to such decree, on pain of temporal suffering or inconvenience? To this question, various answers would be returned by various parties. The Church of England, following the example of that of Rome, maintains, that “the Church *has* power to decree rites and ceremonies, and to settle controversies in matters of

Faith": the Church of Scotland denies, that there is any power to determine ordinances and forms of worship; but alleges, that there does exist a right to prescribe doctrines, and fix the terms of Church membership. Other Churches again, maintain, that no religious association has any scriptural warrant to interfere, either on the ground of ordinances or doctrines. This last opinion is held only by a small portion of the Christian world, whilst those mentioned above, are generally prevalent,—constituting the very basis of all those Churches termed national and orthodox, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Presbyterian; or by whatsoever name they may be called.

Now, Brethren, this is a very important subject for your consideration; and you are bound seriously to weigh the arguments on both sides of the question. Remember, I beseech you, that you are not to consider which view of the subject will be most conducive to your worldly interests, to the support of your religious party, or to the discomfiture of your opponents. Your sole aim *should* be, to discover on which side *truth* is to be found. Believe me, it is better to be with *thousands* on the side of truth, than to be leagued with *millions* in the cause of error. "Cast Satan behind you"—throw away pride, vanity, ambition, the love of power, and false shame; be honest with yourselves, that, at the *great day*, "you may not be condemned with the world." Hear, then, in the first place, the arguments of those who advocate *Church Authority*.

"No society," say they, "can exist without some controlling power. A Church, being a voluntary Association, must, for its own security and peace, have the right to determine the conditions of membership: otherwise, it would soon fall into ruin, and entirely lose its distinctive characteristics. Besides, if it have no power to say what is *truth* and what is *error*—to admit the one, and to reject the other—it might eventually be over-run with false doctrine, and become the direct enemy of Christ. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of every Church, to guard its portals against the admission of error, and, equally so, to exclude heresy, should it have crept in unawares, or grown up in the sanctuary."

The vindicators of Church Authority will admit, that I have honestly stated their case: and, I freely

confess, that on the surface, it seems fair and plausible. The propositions, in themselves, appear reasonable and equitable; but, they are based upon a most dangerous fallacy, and must, eventually, fall to the ground. They speak of the Church, as if it were the institution of *men*, and not of *Christ*: they speak of themselves as *lawgivers*, and not as *executors* of the laws of their *sole* Lord and King. This is the grand, fundamental error of *Orthodoxy*, and the source of all ecclesiastical domination and persecution. Poor, fallible, ignorant mortals, instead of looking upon themselves as the *servants* of the Great Head of the Church, and bound to obey *his* instructions, arrogate to themselves the power of *legislation*, and issue a new code of laws, not only different from those of their Master, but in many cases, directly *opposite* to them.

Now, Brethren, read history, look around you in the world, and say what have been the consequences of this human presumption—this setting up of man, on the Throne of the Redeemer! We have many churches, each of which demands implicit submission from its vassals, and yet, they are as directly opposed to one another, in doctrine and discipline, as north and south! This unhallowed arrogance has filled the dungeons of the Inquisition, constructed racks, invented the most awful tortures, brought millions of martyrs to the burning pile, and crimsoned the green earth with the best blood of her unhappy children! When the growing spirit of humanity and civilization caused men to recoil from the grosser horrors of persecution, the presumptuous tyranny of churches burst forth upon the afflicted earth, in the form of political pains and penalties, of social and civil deprivations! And, even now, when these latter evils have been in a great measure removed, the baleful spirit of ecclesiastical domination still stalks over the earth, “tainting and poisoning with pestiferous breath,” all the fountains of social happiness—filling men who are *called* ministers of the gospel, with *Cain-like* passions, destroying the harmony of communities, and trenching upon the peace of the domestic circle.

Brethren, can a system have the sanction of Heaven, which thus tramples upon the laws of God and the interests of humanity? Can that be accordant with the

gospel of Christ, which virtually supersedes his supreme authority? But, were it even admitted, that *the Church* has a christian right to prescribe doctrines and discipline, the question recurs—what Church? Every Church which claims ecclesiastical sovereignty, looks upon this right as residing in the majority of its members—so that, upon this principle the laws of Christ are not fixed and permanent, but may be moulded according to the caprices of the multitude! Nor is this the greatest evil. We find Churches claiming the same right, which are yet directly opposed to each other. To say nothing of minor contrasts—we find, in our own country, the Church of Rome denouncing Protestantism as “damnable heresy,” the Church of England retorting the heavy charge of “idolatry,” and the Church of Scotland “lifting its covenanted testimony equally against *popery and prelacy*.” Has each of the three, then, a power “to decree rites and ceremonies, and to determine controversies on matters of faith?” If so, whence is the power derived? Is it inherent in each separate Church, or is it derived from “Christ, the head?” If it be inherent, then each Church is its *own lawgiver*, and totally independent of any superior authority: if it be derived from Christ, then according to this orthodox system, *he confers opposite and contradictory rights!* I defy any creed-monger to escape from this dilemma. If the three Churches rest upon their *own* foundation, they are not *Christ’s* if any one of them “rest upon the foundation of Christ,” the other two must be in error! But, as they all equally assume power over their own members, two of them *at least*, must have the right to inculcate what is *false*: and if they be *all* in error, (which I firmly believe they are,) then they all have a *right* to oppose the Great King and Head of the Church, and to inflict penalties upon their members for not joining in their acts of rebellion!

Such, Brethren, are the awful consequences of human legislation in the Redeemer’s kingdom. Men are encouraged, by temporal sanctions, to fight under the banners of error; and deterred by temporal penalties, from bearing forward the standard of truth. Do you approve of these things? Do you think that they contribute to the honour of God, and the sacred influence of religion? But, probably, you have been often told

in some of the harangues which you have heard delivered against popery, "that, although it is a deplorable thing for an *erroneous* Church to exercise authority, it is absolutely incumbent upon the *true* Church to do so, in order to counteract the baneful influence of false doctrine." Indeed! And what Church is the *true one*? Your own, perhaps. But are you *sure* of this? And *how* have you ascertained the important fact? Perhaps you abide by "the standards of the Church," or you may have read the scriptures, and believe that you rightly understand them. But is this a *proof* that you are *right*. Do not all your opponents, the Catholics, the Methodists, the Episcopalians, the Unitarians, believe that *they* are right? Have you then received any patent of infallibility? No brethren; it is all a mere matter of opinion: and your right of judgment is not one whit superior to that of those whom you condemn! If our own convictions be a test of truth, then *all are right*: for, no man does believe, or can believe, that he is in error. With the best intentions, therefore, you may be giving your support to a church which has inflicted penalties upon truth and integrity, and erected barriers for the defence of unscriptural doctrines. I wish not to insinuate, however, that you should be indifferent to the extension of that which you *believe* to be the truth? God forbid! But, I do earnestly wish to inculcate this important lesson—that, where we may *possibly* be *wrong*, we should cherish charity and forbearance; and, that, under no circumstances, should we inflict injury upon our brethren, because they may have fallen into unavoidable error of opinion. Our Heavenly Father, who knows *absolute truth*, graciously bears with the mistakes and frailties of all his children: how disgraceful is it, then, for us who are certain of nothing but our own weakness, and unworthiness, to harass and injure one another?

Keeping these considerations in mind, I entreat you to look back to the proceedings of the General Synod of Ulster for some years past. With a view to extend what they are pleased to term *truth*, and to suppress what they have thought fit to designate *error*, they have openly, avowedly, nay, boastfully, violated the most solemn compacts, trampled upon the established laws and usages of their church, and persecuted upright

Ministers and Congregations, with a vindictive bitterness, unequalled in the annals of Protestantism. With these facts, you are sufficiently acquainted; and I ask you, brethren, do you see any warrant in scripture for their proceedings in these affairs? You read in the New Testament, that "every man ought to be persuaded in his *own* mind—to judge of *himself* what is right—to prove all things—and to hold fast that which is good."

Now, the Remonstrants have only acted in obedience to these great christian precepts and principles. They have endeavoured, with humble prayerfulness of mind, and all diligence of scriptural investigation, to ascertain "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and they have honestly professed what they *believe*. Is there any criminality in all this? Nay, brethren, do you not, in your hearts, honour them for "searching the scriptures," and also for the integrity with which they have declared, in spite of worldly loss, what seems unto them to be "the whole counsel of God?" Yet, for pursuing this straight-forward course, they have been all reviled and misrepresented; the meeting-houses of some have been seized, under armed violence; some have had their very pulpits invaded by their Synodical Brethren; one has been driven from his home; another dragged in bondage like a felon, on the Lord's day; and all have had a large portion, many the chief portion of their earthly support placed in serious jeopardy. Now, my brethren, had they, in any way violated the Laws of God or man, there might have been some plea for these heavy inflictions: but, instead of this, they have been punished for their *faithfulness* to both. In obedience to God, they have searched his Word, and vindicated what they sincerely believe to be his truth. To do this, was equally their duty and their privilege: and had the General Synod any right to injure them for being *honest men*? Surely, it is the extreme of injustice to inflict penalties for the exercise of an admitted *right*, and the faithful discharge of a commanded duty! Yet, that it is for such *alone*, the Remonstrants have been so grievously annoyed and injured, is rendered evident by this astounding fact—that *many* Ministers holding Arian opinions still remain in the Synod unmolested, although they are well known to their brethren: and, what is still worse, some of them are well known to have taken the *Trinitarian Test* who are decided

Unitarians! Hence, it is clear, that the crime of the Remonstrants is not their real or supposed Unitarianism—but, the honesty with which they avowed their opinions, and the fidelity with which they refused to submit their necks to the yoke of human bondage. Arianism, degraded by falsehood, and vilely submitting to the suppression of truth, still nestles under the wings of the Orthodox Synod; but *honest* Arianism, and even *real* Orthodoxy, which spurns the trammels of human authority, are only fitted for unwearied obloquy and persecution!

I think you will agree with me, brethren, that even if the General Synod were *infallible*, and possessed a Scriptural authority to dictate modes of faith, they could have no right to violate their own solemn engagements, and to trample upon the moral laws of God, under the plea of vindicating his honour and his truth. This would be “to do evil that good might come”; and surely, no error of opinion in *others*, can be to us so injurious and degrading, as the positive crimes of broken faith and persecution in *ourselves*. But, if the General Synod be composed of frail and fallible men—if its Ministers, as a body, be possessed of no more than ordinary talents, and less than an ordinary share of learning—if its lay Elders, though generally respectable characters, be usually persons totally ignorant of those branches of education necessary to improve the judgment—if these be admitted facts, is there not something more than presumptuous, is there not something audaciously criminal in a Body *so constituted*, inflicting temporal penalties upon honest men, for adhering to the dictates of conscience? How awful is the consideration, that whilst perhaps ignorantly, without doubt, daringly, punishing their brethren for alleged error, they may, in *reality* be suppressing the truth of God, and giving permanency to principles destructive of the dearest interests of men! Such an appalling possibility, you would readily admit, with regard to the assumptions and domination of the Church of Rome: and, seriously, brethren, do you think, that there is any thing in Presbyterianism, to secure it from the fallibility connected with our mortal race!

But, it has been urged, that the General Synod do not *impose* any creed: they only state their own *interpretations* of Scripture, and allow men to adhere to

them, or desert them, as they please, on the grounds of these interpretations. This is all smooth and pretty verbiage—fine webs to catch silly flies. What, in the first place, are *their* interpretations of Scripture? They are a mere set of human reasonings and fallible deductions: in short, “another Gospel,” with which we have no concern. Say, brethren, are we any more bound, by Scripture or common sense, to adopt the interpretations of the Synod of Ulster, than those of the Church of Rome? The latter is the more ancient, and the more venerable; and on the principle of walking in “the good old way;” we ought to prefer it. But, I am not aware of its being any where stated in Scripture, that we are to be guided by the views which others take of the Sacred Records. We are not to be approved or condemned by the opinions or actions of others, but by our own; and consequently, no man, no Church, can have the right of prescribing either our faith or conduct. To demand an acquiescence in human expositions of Scripture, is to claim the surrender of our own reason, the forfeiture of our undivided allegiance to the *only* King and Head of the Church, and the acknowledgement of an authority between the conscience of man and his Creator. To make such demands, on pain of temporal suffering for refusal, is the grossest and most injurious imposition. It proceeds upon the bare and bold assumption, that one set of men have a right to punish another, for differing from them in opinion, and for being honest. The matter is not mended by saying, with a celebrated Synodical writer, “*We do not punish you; you exclude yourselves by not complying with our terms of communion.*” *Your* terms of communion! Who gave *you* authority to prescribe terms? The Church is not yours, and you cannot, without the greatest arrogance dare to fix terms of fellowship. The Rules of admission are presented to all; and others have as much right to require acquiescence from *you*, as you have to demand it from them: “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” If you have a right to dissent from Catholicity, I have an equal right to dissent from Calvinism: and yet, you revile and injure me for doing what I have a *right* to do!

When your Synodical Leaders, however, talk of having authority to demand submission to *their* interpre-

tations, I would ask you, what do they mean? One would suppose, that they had some *common belief* amongst themselves: but, this is all “a mere matter of moonshine,” and they *know* it! *Their* interpretations, indeed! Brethren, I state, from *personal knowledge*, that the General Synod is a Body composed of Humanitarians, (Socinians,) Arians, Trinitarians, Sabellians, Calvinists, and Arminians. And yet they demand, on pain of reproach and loss, submission to their interpretations of Scripture! Does this statement shock you? The fault is not mine: I have only laid bare the hideous carcass—the *membra disjuncta*—which conceals its monstrous deformities under the borrowed mantle of Orthodoxy!

But, it may be, that by “their interpretations,” they mean the anti-scriptural dogmas which they have laid down in their Overtures. If so, they require *others* to believe, what they do not believe themselves. They have entered into a base league, a hollow truce, to deceive the world. They do not hold, and they *know* they do not hold, the opinions which they profess, and to which they require others to subscribe! And this is their boasted uniformity of faith! And the Remonstrants have been calumniated and persecuted for refusing to join in a system of trickery and delusion!

No doubt, there are some sincere Trinitarians and Calvinists in the General Synod: but *who are they*? *Profession* does not disclose the secret. They have *one creed with many minds*: they dare not deny the fact: and, it may be, when the moral principle has once yielded to popularity or gain, that the most orthodox declaimers are the most heterodox believers! Brethren, do you like the tree which produces *such* fruits? Do you admire a system which tortures integrity, and holds out a premium to time-serving and hypocrisy! Is it pleasant, that you should know nothing of your ministers’ faith from their pulpit services? These awful circumstances are of their own making. If there be evil in the exposure, blame not the hand which rends the unhallowed disguise, but rather those which wove and framed it!

Brethren, ought your ministers “to preach boldly the *whole* counsel of God?” You will doubtless reply—“they must be wolves and not shepherds, if they do not.” Now, what to each of them, *is* the whole coun-

sel of God? It is exactly what he *himself* believes to be such. If he disbelieve the Doctrines of the Confession of Faith and the Overtures, to *him*, they are *falsehoods* and not *counsel*: and, if he preach them, for interest or popularity, in the sight of God, he preaches *lies*! Dare the ministers of the General Synod, then, preach what they believe? Yes; if they be Trinitarians and Calvinists: but if Unitarians or Arminians, (which, in my soul I believe the great majority of them are,) they must suppress the truth, preach falsehoods, be driven out of the Church, or compelled to take a Calvinistic Assistant, like the Rev. Ephraim Stephenson of Enniskilen, who deserved a better fate! Put it to your own hearts, brethren, and say—is this a proper condition for Ministers of the Gospel to live in, amongst their people? How can you be edified, or how can they do their duty, under such circumstances? They may flatter your prejudices, but they dare not enlighten your minds: they may tell you what you wish to *hear*, but they dare not tell you, in many cases, what, in their minds, the Scriptures *teach*! And this too, in a reformed Protestant Church! Why, Popery never required more; and, had it been able, by Decrees and Councils, to enforce its demands, Protestantism would never have obtained an existence. Brethren, if you desire your Ministers to be honest men; if you wish to know the truth; if you would maintain the liberty of Christians, you cannot long remain enthralled by the degrading, truth-suppressing enactments of the General Synod.

You have been taught, however, to believe, that all these things are necessary for the support of Orthodoxy. It may be so; but do you not feel a secret misgiving, in your own minds, as to the soundness of a system which requires *such* support. The truth of God is able to defend itself without the feeble barriers and entrenchments of human laws and church authority. Believe me, it is a reproach to your principles, to have it virtually admitted, that they cannot retain their footing in the world, without the infliction of pains and penalties. I speak not, at present, of their truth or falsehood: I only speak of the impression naturally produced by the proceedings of the General Synod: and the time is coming, when you will agree with me in admitting, that a good

cause requires not the aid of intolerant enactments, and that no sincere christian could endeavour to advance the honour of his master by injuring his fellow disciples.

I am aware, brethren, of the satisfaction which men always feel in the possession of power, and the natural pride which they experience in the support of numbers and fashion. On these principles, you may feel it very gratifying, to have an influence over the opinions and interests of others, through the decrees of ecclesiastical assemblies; and you may rejoice in your power to suppress heresy in the Church. But, you well remember the words of Christ—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them likewise; for, this is the Law and the Prophets." Now, in giving your support and countenance to the injury of your fellow Christians, because they differ from you in certain views of Doctrine and Church Government, are you complying with our Saviour's benevolent injunction? Would you desire the Remonstrants to annoy and persecute *you*, because you honestly entertain and avow your religious principles? Deal candidly with yourselves; you must confess, that "verily you have been guilty in this matter:" you have not fulfilled the great law of Christian Justice.

As Protestants, too, you boast of the right of private judgment. In this you do well: it is, indeed, a glorious privilege. But, surely, you do not restrict the exercise of this right to yourselves; for, you must admit, that it is equally that of others. In the use of this privilege, however, they may dissent from your opinions; and, I seriously ask you, is there any crime in this, and are you entitled to punish them for the free exercise of an *undoubted right*?

Another boast, is your privilege of choosing your own Ministers: they are appointed by your own votes, and not by the authority of any pope, prelate, or lay patron. This is all excellent in *words*, but is it the *fact*? No, brethren, you enjoy no such right. The General Synod's Committee utterly deny you the right of choosing any but rank Calvinists and Trinitarians. True, indeed, you may select a particular sample of the *same commodity*: but, this may, ere long, appear to you only a choice of evils; and whatever change of sentiment you may undergo, you must either continue to submit to

Calvinistic preaching, or subject yourselves and your children to temporal annoyance and loss. This fact may not much alarm you at present, as you probably anticipate no change in your religious opinions: but, I put it to you, as right feeling, honourable men, whether you possess any scriptural or rational authority, to interfere with the choice of your brethren? Have you any right, to say to any congregation—"you shall not elect a Minister whose views of Divine Truth *you, yourselves* approve: you must choose a Pastor of *our* selection, (although you abhor his opinions,) or, as the just recompense of your contumacy, you shall be cut off from the Church!" I speak not of the temporal loss connected with synodical deprivation; I speak only of the ecclesiastical tyranny; and I ask you, as fair, reasonable men, is there one particle of genuine Presbyterianism in the assumption of such unwarrantable church power—and can those be said "to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free," who are thus "entangled in the yoke of human bondage?" You would spurn at the dictation of man in the choice of your legal and medical advisers, or even in that of your domestic servants: and yet, with strange inconsistency, you not only tamely surrender your *own* rights, where your highest interests are concerned, but concur in the oppression and degradation of your unoffending brethren!

Let it not be said, that the various members of a Church could not live in harmony and mutual co-operation, whilst differing in religious opinions. Were this the case, no Church could enjoy internal peace: for, the members of no Church on earth possess uniformity of faith. The Established Church, it is notorious, contains both ministers and people of *all creeds*; and the General Synod never enjoyed so much happiness, unity, and prosperity, as when its members openly avowed different sentiments, and, like honest men, "agreed to differ." Would you prefer to this truly Christian unity of spirit amidst diversity of creed, that hollow and insincere profession of a uniformity of faith, which every man feels to be only a pretence—a casting of dust into the eyes of the people—and "the crying of peace, where there is no peace"!

Remember, too, my brethren, that no man's opinions are under his own control. We cannot believe, or disbelieve any peculiar doctrine, at our option, any more than we could change our features or our stature. We may read, pray, converse, investigate, (and all these we are bound to do,) but our opinions, in the end, will result from our convictions, and these we can never alter, except on the production of new evidence. How absurd is it then, as well as criminal, to injure men for the maintenance of tenets, which they sincerely believe to be in accordance with the word of God, and which they possess no self-determining power to change? It would not be more absurd to punish them for the heretical colour of their hair, or the heterodox complexion of their skin.

The terms of admission into the Apostolic Church, (and the *only* terms,) were "a sincere belief in Christ, as the *Son* of God." On these conditions men were admitted into the Communion of the genuine Church on earth, and saints have the promise of being admitted into the glorious communion of the Church triumphant in Heaven; and I leave you to consider, calmly, and candidly, whether the General Synod of Ulster, in prescribing other terms, has not violated the fundamental principles of Protestantism, "forsaken its first love," and forfeited the true character of an Apostolic Church. These new terms of fellowship I shall expose to your view, in their genuine colours, in some future communications, and show you, that the *authorized* Doctrines are equally at variance with human reason and the Word of God. In the meantime, I remain,
Brethren,

Your faithful Servant,

CHRISTIANUS.

Cork, October 13th, 1831.

SUNDAY SCHOOL READINGS.

No. II.

Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 2.

"NOW THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID, AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP: AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD BROODED ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS."

The earth had been created but was still a shapeless mass; "without form," does not mean of no outline or form; that would be impossible; but it was unshapely; it had no beauty, which was afterwards conferred on it. This sense of the word "form," may be illustrated from the prophecy respecting our Saviour, which says, that he did not appear with any worldly splendour which might make him an object of attraction: *see Isaiah, 53, 2.* "He hath no form," "VOID," unoccupied by vegetables or animals.

"DARKNESS WAS ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP."

Darkness gives the idea of want of form; no distinguishable outline, and no outline are connected ideas; *see Job, 10-22.* A land of darkness as darkness itself,—of the shadow of death without any ORDER, and where the light is as darkness. "The deep," should not be limited to its most frequent sense, the sea; it means also a gulph, or insecure mass of water and earth: *see Psalm 69, verses 14-15.* "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not water-floods overflow me, neither let THE DEEP swallow me, and let not the pit shut her mouth on me." The psalmist seeking defence against his enemies compares them to a chaos of difficulties, combining pit, quagmire, and water: the "deep" herein does not mean the sea within its limits.

"THE SPIRIT OF GOD."

Some influence of God: some biblical enquirers have understood the passage to mean "a mighty wind from God," the word "brooded," however, indicates gentle influence rather than force, and being derived from the

brooding of a fowl over her eggs, seems to forbid this sense. Our belief in the fact of God having made chaos habitable, is not at all affected by the ignorance of the means. However, if any thing be revealed to us, we are right in pursuing the enquiry; and surely there is no nobler exercise of mind, than exploring the ways of God to his whole creation. It has been alleged that our Saviour Jesus Christ was the maker of this world; this mistake is founded on the misapplication of passages in the New Testament, and applying the phraseology which relates to a moral renewal of man, by the teachings of the gospel, to the physical creation of the earth; and this we will examine in our progress. Our present business is however to investigate whether Moses relates the employment of any agency, or whether creation is not attributed to God, and him only. Those persons who divide Deity into parts and functions, have also alleged "the spirit of God" mentioned here, is the third part of the godhead! The third omnipotent! The Holy Ghost! And that it was he who "arranged" the world. The spirit of God however is obviously put to imply a mode of Jehovah's operation, and not to indicate a personal and separate worker. We think that the scripture does not reveal a separate godhead, in unity with the other parts of the godhead, either in this place, or in that part of the scripture where a manifestation of divine influence was vouchsafed to our Saviour, by a flame in the form of a Dove hovering over him.

Verse 3.—"AND GOD SAID LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT." "*God said,*" That is God willed or decreed; thoughts are denominated sayings, see *psalm*, 53-1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God:" and again in *psalm* 27-8. "When thou saidst, seek ye my face, my *heart said* unto me, thy face Lord will I seek."

"LET THERE BE LIGHT."

There is an unexplained difficulty attached to this text if taken literally. Light is commanded, before the present sources of light were made, the creation of which bodies is related in the occurrence of the fourth day. Various attempts have been made to produce a harmony in these passages of scripture, or to account satisfactorily for their dissonance. As far as I have

been able to investigate those efforts, to me they seem all vague and unsatisfactory. Truth dictates to us, that it is better to admit that to our present ignorance there is an apparent contradiction in terms,—than to adopt any forced explanation, or ingenious guess, which does not satisfy our minds. We believe the sacred records; our object being consequently to discover what is recorded, we have nothing to do with the wholesale objection of the unbeliever, who gets over every difficulty by asserting the whole to be untrue. We shall, however, read over some of the solutions proposed for this obscurity. It has been said that the Mosaic relation, is a compilation from various histories of the creation, delivered to Moses by Tradition, and not a transcription of an inspired communication to him. Of what value this hypothesis, may be for general application, I do not perceive: the record taken as a whole, is either true or untrue; and if the relation of the creation of Light in the first chapter corresponded with that in the fourth, the repetition of the same fact, in the same manner, in two places, would be consistent with this solution: but here we have two different, and in part opposite statements. God commanded the Light and saw that it was good; he separated it from darkness, and named them day and night; this took place on the first day; yet we are told in the fourteenth verse, that these events occurred on the fourth day. These then appear not to be two several accounts; but actually two different relations, touching the creation of Light or Lights in the world, or our solar system. The next attempt at solution is; that the account of the creation of Light in the 5th verse, is “*a general declaration of the fact,*” and that verses 14 to 19 give the details: just as the first verse announces summarily, what the whole chapter is employed in detailing. This explanation however has to encounter the same objection as the former had: the times of creation are specified, and the work of the first period, cannot, as far as we can see, be the work of the fourth. Another theory is, that the Sun was the luminary the first day, but that his body was obscured by mists from the chaotic world; and that the exhibition of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, was called the production of “*Lights in the firmament*” on the fourth day. A fourth theory is, that Light was formed the first day, and divided from the

darkness, but that it was not the Sun's light, but an irradiation or luminous production, exhibited temporarily until the Sun and other light-yielding orbs were created. Having [laid before] you, [the most usual theories on this question, we may conclude that whatever relation of the creation we find in scripture, its being greatly *above* our experience, can be no objection to its adoption : the creation or first production of things must be to us a combination of wonders ; and the nature or laws of a creation being deducible only from what is revealed of the creation, we must admit that the circumstances revealed are the laws of creation, because we cannot frame laws on speculation. We have only one other remedy which is to reject the relation ; but then we are not at liberty to invent a substitute, and few christians will act in this manner. One caution may be useful to us in our studies ; we are not to expect that every⁴¹¹ part of the most ancient work in the world, will be so copious and explicit, as that we shall meet with no difficulties. On the contrary, we may expect, that our industry and zeal will be exercised as we go along ; that abbreviated histories delivered to Hebrews, in an eastern climate, in a language of few words, and ages ago, will present obscurities to western christians, at this remote period of time ; but we do believe that honest enquiry after scriptural knowledge, will in time be rewarded by the removal of every obstruction to the full understanding of the word of God ; and we know that even now, though historical obscurities present themselves to our ignorance, yet every thing relating to faith and moral practice is revealed so plainly that "he who runs may read."

Verse 4—"AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD."

This phrase indicates perfection in the light, and recommends its perfectness to man in suitable language ; it is not meant to imply, that God found it necessary to examine the work of his own hands.

"AND GOD DIVIDED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS."

And God caused the light to come, and darkness to come, distinctly and separately.

Verse 5—"AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE DARKNESS CALLED HE NIGHT."

It is most probable that these names were conveyed to Adam by God, as we find, that he was authorised to name the animals himself: see Gen. 2. 19.

"AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST DAY."

The literal reading is, "and the evening was, and the morning was, the first day." The Sabbath of the Hebrews was from Evening to Evening: see Leviticus 23. 32.—"From evening to evening shall ye celebrate your sabbath," and the authenticity of the Law is supported by the Jews continuing the rule to this day. Darkness had preceded light, so that night was before the day, on the first day of creation. Consider for a moment, and you will perceive that the historian of events would, by reckoning from the same circumstances of night, and then day, continue the successive periods, in the order in which they were first presented to him. Tacitus, the historian, says, the early Germans reckoned by nights and not by days, as the night seemed to introduce the day; and we retain a similar practice when we speak of a fortnight, a se'nnight, &c. We generally, however, consider day-light as the commencement of our periods of time, yet we are not to apply our custom to history before us: as the evening here mentioned, is not the decline of day, but the twilight of approaching light, or day-break.

Verse 6th—"AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS, AND LET IT DIVIDE THE WATERS FROM THE WATERS."

It appears from this verse, that great and homogenous humidity pervaded the vicinity of our earth, and that a concentration of these fluids was now commanded. The air, or atmosphere, which is our firmament or division, took up and secured its portion, and earth received on its surface its portion. The power of air to hold a quantity of water in solution is an interesting fact, and as its operation is important in the economy of nature, your attention will be well bestowed on this law for a short time. You have observed the water turned by heat into steam, rushing out of boiling

vessels and combining with the air, so as to be invisible; but you have also seen, in some places, the air so saturated with steam that it would not dissolve any more, and the steam was sensible to the eye and the feeling. Yet the air of this latter place might be so heated as to take up a still larger portion of Steam, and make the atmosphere again transparent. From this state of things, by cooling the air suddenly, a fog of steam might again be produced; now the whole theory of the waters being dispersed in the atmosphere at the time of creation, may be explained on this law. The Creator having given the atmosphere the powers then, which it now possesses, and causing fine weather, would account for it.—In fine weather more moisture is held in the air than in wet weather: in rain the fluid is deposited, as it is also in dew. We cannot, of course, decide in what way the first dispersion of homogeneous fluids was performed, but we know this law as one of God's second causes; and in many cases the Creator has ennobled man, by permitting him to understand the secondary means by which his providence is manifested.

Verse 7th.—“AND GOD MADE THE FIRMAMENT, AND DIVIDED THE WATERS WHICH WERE UNDER THE FIRMAMENT, FROM THE WATERS WHICH WERE ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT: AND IT WAS SO.”

This verse appears to be an amplification of verse 6. Verse 8.—“AND GOD CALLED THE FIRMAMENT HEAVEN.” The word Heaven, has, both in Scripture and in common usage, several meanings. We call atmosphere and all above us Heaven: and yet we know our atmosphere changes its relative position as we change ours; the apparent firmament or heaven of blue sky, is nearer the surface of the earth to those who look up from a deep mine, than it is to those who have attained the top of a mountain. Indeed, in mountainous countries, clouds and vapours often roll beneath the feet of the traveller; In cloudy weather our own Heaven is often nearer to us than when in bright weather the clouds are higher up. Such is one usage of “*heaven*.” The word also implies that more distant part of extension where the stars are placed, and which is far beyond our atmosphere. Heaven, also, is used to indicate the fancied peculiar residence of God, because it is an expression

of elevation and grandeur. It is also a word indicating the place of the happy, and is limited in extent, by persons who believe that future happiness will be marked out by some locality in the creation of God. The sense in which it is now used is, obviously, the first, namely, the atmosphere or clouds above us.

“AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE SECOND DAY.”

Verse 9—“AND GOD SAID, LET THE WATERS UNDER THE HEAVENS BE GATHERED TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE, AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR, AND IT WAS SO.”

Mr. Wellbeloved, in his valuable translation of Genesis, adds, “*For the waters under the Firmament were gathered into their places, and the dry land appeared.*”

Verse 10—“AND GOD CALLED THE DRY LAND, EARTH, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE WATERS, CALLED HE SEAS, AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.”

Our artificial division into large or lesser seas, under the names Ocean, Lake, &c., does not interfere with the original naming of the large bodies of water mentioned here. We may yet for convenience add several subdivisions of the land and water, without interference with the original name; indeed among us the word sea is applied to ocean, as a general term, and probably, always will. We may also observe, that in the Eastern parts of the world, all great rivers are often denominated seas; in this manner the country of Babylon which was watered by the Euphrates was called “*the desert of the sea*,” see Isaiah 21. 1. Jeremiah speaks of it in the same manner, see Chap. 51. 35–36. “*The violence done to me, &c., shall be upon Babylon, &c., and I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.*” Lakes are called the sea in several parts of the New Testament, as, the Sea of Gallilee—Mathew 4. 18. We see satisfactorily from the Hebrew use of the word *Sea*, that the gathering together of the waters were rightly called seas.

Verse 11—"AND GOD SAID, LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH GRASS, THE HERB YIELDING SEED, AND THE FRUIT TREE YIELDING FRUIT AFTER HIS KIND, WHOSE SEED IS IN ITSELF UPON THE EARTH, AND IT WAS SO."

The grass, and smaller plants, all comprehended here under the word "grass," were the first created: and this is consistent with the wisdom of God, and the wise progression of his laws of nature, which he established: the ground was covered with herbage, which would retain moisture, and shelter the next order of productions from too much drought. Grass, and moss, and all small plants, are invaluable as a nursery for the succeeding vegetable creation. We find our mountains generally covered with grass, moss, and heath: by them the violence of torrents are checked; the effect of heat and drought, as well as of cold, and wind, mitigated; and life and vegetation is carried to an elevation, that in naked mountains we never see. The apparently insignificant creatures of God signify much in the plan of providence and wisdom. The seeds of the small grasses were trifling, and not valuable as food; but those of "*herbs*," the next created objects, give them importance. Hemp, for instance, and the mustard, have seeds of consequence, as also the flax, which gives us linseed, valuable for its oil: the seeds of herbs, then, make a distinction of consequence. The third class of vegetable creatures, are fruit trees,—"*The fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed was in itself.*" Fruit trees have their seeds in their fruits, and indeed seed is the fruit of every tree, though in some cases the covering of the seed is an article of food; for instance in the apple, peach, plum, pear, cherry, &c., &c., we try to increase the pulpy covering of the seed in size and flavour. In the almond, and nuts of different kinds, the seed itself is eaten; all trees have some fruit, which is the seed, or the receptacle of it. Some speculators formerly attempted to prove that there were plants which grew without seeds, by a cause which they called "spontaneous generation." This theory, however, which was founded on ignorance of the history of nature, is nearly extinct now among men of information, and few others allude to it; nor should I, but that it has been used as an argument against the Mosaic account of the creation. Plants, we

know, spring up at times where their seeds have not been known to exist. White clover, in our country, will, if the ground be cleared by burning the surface, frequently appear where it was not known before; but some seeds have wonderful powers of life, and if buried out of the influence of air and moisture, will remain for years ready to vegetate as soon as turned up by deep ploughing or other causes, which may place them in favourable circumstances. Old gardens, which have been under pasture for years, will, when broken up, produce numerous garden flowers, most of which are exotics, yet no one mistakes this occurrence for spontaneous generation. The multitudes of the mushroom tribe which appear in favourable weather, have been alleged in favour of this doctrine; but Providence has ordered that the lowest and apparently most insignificant of his creatures, should be possessed of the most amazing tenacity of life, and almost unlimited powers of reproduction; heat, and cold, and dryness in extreme states, only suspend their existence: and one plant by its light and almost invisible seeds, can sow an unknown extent of ground, thus the air, earth, and water, swarm with these humble existences. God gives his smaller creatures to be nurses to his more elevated creation; and thus amidst the myriads of beings there is no confusion, but glorious order and harmony which are worthy the Omniscient.

Verse 12—"AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH GRASS, &c., AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD."

We must observe how often our *English* grammatical rules are violated by our translators following frequently the Hebrew idiom. In this case, the personal pronoun in the masculine form, is applied to "grass, trees, and herbs; yet in the same passage the neuter form is afterwards used; this will be a key to the usage of personal pronouns, and personifications, which occur frequently in the Bible, and which construction, some of the Orthodox have built doctrines on: even in the new Testament, its Hebrew authors have adhered to Hebrew idioms, and through the Greek of these Hebrews' language, has passed with many Hebraisms into our tongue. In this particular case, we refer to the personification of passions evil and good, which, as we meet, we shall

have occasion to observe on. One word more on grammatical forms: we find here, that "herbs and trees," are called, "*the herb, and the tree,*" we must consequently take care not to build theories on the numbers of nouns, any more than on the genders of pronouns, and we must rather make Scripture explain Scripture, wherever a difficulty occurs. These inaccuracies are but the defects of language, and go rather to establish the ancientness of the Bible, than to injure its authenticity.

13th Verse—AND THE MORNING AND THE EVENING WERE THE THIRD DAY.

I am, &c.

A LEARNING TEACHER.

(*To be continued.*)

CALUMNIOUS ATTACK OF "THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN," ON MESSRS. J. MITCHELL, F. BLAKELY, AND H. MONTGOMERY.

The following audacious calumny appears in the last number of "*The Orthodox Presbyterian.*" The *entire* article is given, that our friends both in England and Ireland, may have an opportunity of seeing another specimen of the spirit and character of *Orthodoxy*, in this country.

"*Mission to England, from the Association for the protection of the (so called) rights of conscience in Ireland.*"

"ROCHEFOUCAULT, or somebody else, has defined an ambassador, "a man sent out to tell lies for the good of his country." We make little doubt, that to political diplomatists, the definition will sometimes apply; but in the case of a clerical mission, we may well presume its incorrectness. More especially when men set out in the professed service of 'conscience,' we may well expect a strict adherence to truth in all their sayings, and doings, and printings. Of the 'sayings' in London we have got a sample, which we shall, perhaps, consider hereafter. Meantime we select from a public official advertisement in the principal Unitarian Magazine, the following statements. We call to them the attention of the people of Ireland and England; and particularly, if they ever see our pages, of the 'Unitarians' of England, that they may see how grossly they have been imposed upon by the representations of the mission, and how foully the character of the General Synod of Ulster has been traduced.

"Amongst other things, the mission informs the people of England, that—

"*One congregation which separated from the General Synod, in vindication of its Christian privileges, is involved in an expensive and protracted lawsuit, for the recovery of its place of worship; and the General Synod of Ulster have lately ordered legal proceedings to be taken, for the purpose of driving a most exemplary Minister and his*

congregation from the meeting-house which the people erected nearly a century ago, and in which the venerable Minister has officiated for 30 years!!!

"When we read this paragraph, we do confess, our brain felt a strange degree of confusion. We tried the Minutes of the Synod, we tossed over the pages of our memory; and though we have some knowledge of Synodical affairs, we could make no discovery of its truth. Indeed how could we? The whole thing is—a fabrication. 'One congregation,' they say, 'separated.' It is not true. A *part* of a congregation did so. But we have yet to learn, that a part is equal to the whole; or that an Arian secession has a right to usurp the name, privileges, and property of any congregation to which they may have belonged. As to the assertion, that the General Synod 'has lately ordered legal proceedings,' the thing is without a *word of truth*. Such a thing was never talked of in the Synod, nor even in any of its committees. But it was a good way to misrepresent the Synod, it was an admirable key to the hearts of Englishmen; and so it was written, and so it was printed, and so it was read from pulpits, and so it goes forth to the world. We do openly call upon its authors to tell the world, how they dared to invent and utter it; and we equally proclaim to our friends and to our enemies—the statement of the mission is—utterly untrue."

The preceding attack has been issued to the world, under the disguise of the editorial "*We*"; but, its tone of swaggering insolence, and its utter disregard of truth, stamp the name of the Author upon it, in characters as legible to every man in Ulster, as if it were printed, at full length, in *giant* capitals. I solemnly believe, that there is but *one* man in the kingdom capable of writing it. How forcibly is one reminded, by the progress of this unhappy man, of those who are described by Solomon—"They sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall"! Not contented with a thousand gross and wilful misrepresentations, concerning the religious opinions of the Remonstrants—not satisfied with having *one* of their Ministers detained in armed custody for eight hours, and dragged over the country like a convicted felon, on the Lord's day, whilst an *Orthodox Saint* usurped his pulpit—not satiated with the unmanly vengeance heaped upon *another*, (and he too an early friend and neighbour,) by a tyrannical landlord, who has driven him from his home in the autumn of life—not softened by the harassing anxieties, the unceasing toils, and the heavy expenses experienced by *all*—not contented with these, and countless other calamities inflicted upon his former bosom friends, and brother Ministers, because they stood in the way of his unprincipled ambition, and refused "to make shipwreck of faith and good conscience," at his bidding—not content with all these things, he has now come forward with an untameable malignity, and aimed a death-blow at the *moral reputation* of three of their number. He has dared publicly to accuse them of one of the most degrading crimes of which men could be guilty—the crime of going out upon a *Religious Mission*, and endeavouring to raise money by *wilful falsehood and misrepresentation*.

"This was the unkindest cut of all." He well knows, that, with the smallest flaw in their moral characters, the Remonstrant Ministers would be spurned by their own people, and despised by the

world. Were *they* to belie their principles, and in their own persons to depart from that moral purity, which they recommend as the end and object of religion, they would not only be instantly excluded from their pulpits, but even driven from the pale of reputable society. In this respect the Champions of Orthodoxy have an amazing advantage over them. Its very name casts a *mystical halo* around them, which dazzles the eyes of the multitude, and prevents the perception of their crimes. In fact, in this, as in other cases, "the sins of the elect," seem "rather to redound to their advantage." I think, the vile "Accuser of the Brethren," in "*The Orthodox Presbyterian*," knows something of a man, whose statements upon oath, have been publicly contradicted, by many persons of the highest respectability—who has lain down under numerous public charges of wilful falsehood, proved against him by his own hand, by official documents, and by unimpeachable testimony—who took as his chief adviser in a pretended reformation of the Church, an individual whom he had, *himself*, a few weeks previously, represented as a scoffing infidel, and a degraded debauchee—a man, whose testimony upon oath, was shown to be directly at variance with his public statements in Synod, and who endeavoured to escape from the horrible dilemma in which he was placed, by daringly denying the very words which he had uttered a few hours before, in the presence of one thousand people! I think, the Editor of "*The Orthodox Presbyterian*," knows something of such a character—the tithe of whose sins against honour and truth, would degrade all the Ministers in the Remonstrant Synod—and yet he is not only permitted to preach, but lauded by Saintly Orators, as "the Champion of God, who put to flight the hosts of Satan"! How strange, that with this *real* weakness at home, the Editor has dared, *falsely* to assail the characters of John Mitchel, Fletcher Blakely, and Henry Montgomery—men who have passed through the terrible ordeal of the last three years, without a single stain upon their veracity. It is too hard for such men to be compelled to rebut the calumny of a worthless slanderer; yet, if they treated it with the contempt which it deserves, their silence might be construed, by a party, into an acquiescence in its justice. I shall, therefore, by a plain statement of facts, establish their vindication, and hurl back the charge of falsehood on the naked head of their calumniator.

The Deputies from "*The Association for the protection of the Rights of Conscience*," did nothing underhand, or in a corner. They published to the world, for the inspection both of friends and foes, the objects of their Mission: and in glancing slightly at the shocking persecutions to which conscientious Christians have been exposed, by a dominant faction in the Synod of Ulster, they adverted to the case of CLOUGH, in these words—"One congregation, which separated from the General Synod, in vindication of its Christian privileges, is involved in an expensive and protracted Lawsuit, for the recovery of its place of worship." Of this statement, the Orthodox Editor says,—"*The whole thing is a fabrication—it is not true.*" Now, how any man, however hardened in falsehood, should dare, *in the Province of Ulster*, thus to deny the statement of the Deputation, the truth of which is known to, per-

haps, one million of people, I am utterly at a loss to determine. It may be, that he recollects the demoniac applause, by which the utterance of a known falsehood was received by his partisans, in the Synod at Lurgan, and that he now desires to astonish and delight them, in the same manner. Be the motive what it may, the fact is deplorable—that any man, trusting to a depraved state of the public mind, and the baneful influence of religious and political party, should have the hardihood to deny facts of the utmost notoriety, and which are recorded in the proceedings of a Public Body.

In the year 1829, the Congregation of Clough, justly abhorring the partial and intolerant proceedings of the General Synod, agreeably to the usages of the Church dissolved their connexion with that Body, and joined the Presbytery of Antrim—a co-ordinate Body with the Synod, and one, *to* and *from* which, congregations had frequently passed, for one hundred years. The Presbytery supplied the Pulpit of Clough for some weeks, when a discontented minority, countenanced by a petty officer of yeomanry, and encouraged by members of other Churches, took possession of the Meeting-house, barred the doors and windows, turned the House of Prayer into a theatre for drinking, maintained armed possession, and seized the Books of the Congregation. Since that period, now upwards of two years, the respectable Congregation of Clough, that joined the Presbytery of Antrim, in the usual manner, have been precluded from enjoying the use of their place of worship! The nominal possession is still retained by the minority; but they dare not celebrate worship therein. The right of property was about to be brought to trial, by the respectable majority, at Common Law, when the minority put the case into the Equity side of the Court of Exchequer, where one point has already been tried, and another, (the main one,) is still pending. It would be unprofitable to detail all the outrages and violence of the Synodical partisans: yet, although perfectly cognizant of these facts, the Editor has dared to accuse the Deputation of wilful falsehood!

Unhappy man! he attempts to make out his case by a contemptible quibble. He says—"A part of a Congregation did separate; but we have yet to learn, that a part is equal to the whole"! On this principle, then, all the persecuting Enactments of the General Synod, were null and void—for they were the acts of a *part*, not of the *whole*! Mr. Park, by the same reasoning, is not the Minister of the Congregation of Ballymoney for a respectable portion of it have joined the Remonstrants! How would the Editor like this logic; or how would it be relished by several of his Brethren, many of whose hearers, may, ere long, secede from the Synod? He knew when he penned it, that he was writing a paltry quibble: for in all public assemblies, the act of the majority is stated as the act of the whole. The late House of Commons passed the Reform Bill, though only by a majority of one: and, surely, *one hundred and three* families, including almost all the wealth and respectability of the Congregation of Clough, ought to be a sufficient counter-balance to *sixty-five* or *sixty-eight* members of a minority—some of whom had paid no stipend for eight or ten years! In fact, the Editor knows right well, that the *Congregation* joined the Presby-

tery of Antrim : for in every case, save the election of a Minister and Precentor, the act of a *simple majority* is considered the act of the Congregation.

I marvelled not a little, however, to read this candid Author's remarks, concerning the statement of the deputation, and about "a part not being equal to the whole:" for, if I do not greatly err, he was the ring-leader of a base Synodical cabal, that directed the Moderator of the General Synod to sign a Memorial for Royal Bounty, in favour of the minister ordained to the Orthodox *minority* of Clough, as if he had been the minister of the *whole* congregation ! And when the Government discovered the infamous cheat which had been practised upon them, and withdrew their Warrant for the payment of the Bounty, I greatly err again, if the saintly Editor did not rave and rant, and foam, and "threat rebellion," until he electrified the good folk of Coleraine at the last meeting of Synod, because the Government were honest enough to withdraw a grant which had been procured from them by knavery and deception ! The man cannot blush ; for shame has long forsaken him ; but the public may now contemplate the fresh glory of his character, in coming forward as the accuser of his brethren, for stating what all law and custom authorized them to state, whilst he, himself, contrary to all law and custom, called a paltry *fraction*, the congregation of Clough, and joined in a disgraceful attempt to deceive the Government ! There was a Haman of old, who erected a gallows for a Mordecai that would not bow down to his ambition—and he was, *himself*, hanged thereon !

The next charge preferred against the Deputation is, that they made the following statement—"the General Synod have lately ordered legal proceedings to be taken, for the purpose of driving a most exemplary Minister and his congregation from the meeting-house which the people erected nearly a century ago, and in which the venerable Minister has officiated for thirty years." This paragraph, it seems, excessively perplexed the Orthodox Editor. "His brain felt a strange confusion : he tried the Minutes of Synod, and tossed over the pages of his own memory"—but all in vain ! No trace of the Rev. Samuel Arnold, or the congregation of Warrenpoint could be found ! Well, this is marvellous ! But, no memory, however great, can retain every thing ! Perhaps these names were obliterated by the horrible recollections of Grey-Abbey, and the still more appalling visions connected with Ballycarry, where certain beings called Ministers of the Gospel, assembled from the four winds to ruin an honest man, their early friend, and the chosen companion of their hearts ! Be this as it may, Warrenpoint could neither be found in Minutes nor memory ; and consequently, the statement of the Deputation is, "without a word of truth"—the doughty Editor in high heroics "proclaims equally to friends and enemies, that it is *utterly untrue* !" He then, with mighty and commanding voice, "openly calls upon its Authors to tell the world, how they *dared* to invent and utter it !" To the former part of the call, I can make no reply—I know nothing of its "invention," for it was framed by the General Synod ; but, I "uttered it," because the infamous "order" was made in that Body.

The Public Papers of July last record the odious fact; and although the lynx-eyed Editor could not find it in "the Minutes," I here present it to the public, extracted from those very Minutes, *literatim et verbatim*.

"That this Synod highly approve of the conduct and zeal of the Presbytery of Dromore in the management of the affairs of the congregation of Warrenpoint; that the Presbytery be directed to continue their attention to these affairs, and to take LEGAL ADVICE how they are to act therein; and that they be empowered to act upon that advice, in which this Synod agree to countenance and assist them."

Read it over again, Mr. Editor, and—*blush*, I had almost said, but no—set yourself about devising some verbal quibble, or some Lurgan falsehood, by which to escape from the snare in which you have emmeshed yourself! If "*Legal Advice*, to be acted upon," be not "*ordering legal proceedings to be taken*," language has no meaning, and words are less than wind.

Oh! but you may say—"the object is not to drive Mr. Arnold from his Meeting House." Indeed! What is the object, then? Is it to keep him in peaceable possession—to drive away the swarms of ruthless persecutors, both lay and clerical, and of various churches, that have been let loose upon him and his faithful little flock, by the Presbytery of Dromore? This would be a merciful provision, worthy of a great religious Body, towards an aged, irreproachable, and unoffending brother. But, I fear this is not your object; for your precious resolution, "highly approves of the conduct of the Presbytery in this affair." Had I time and space, I could make the blood of men run cold, by describing the unjust and inhuman treatment which Mr. Arnold has experienced, under foul combinations of lay and clerical power, and unnatural leagues of Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Mr. Arnold, like a true christian, refused to utter a falsehood in the Synod of Ulster; and some of the lowest class of his nominal hearers, chiefly Methodists, dissatisfied with his conduct in this respect, very properly retired from his ministry, and allowed him to live in peace. This, however, was too christian a course to please "the organizer of mischief;" and he procured the Episcopal Church of Warrenpoint, from the pulpit of which he poured his poison, and afterwards made arrangements with the Seceders for the annoyance of their Pastor. From that hour, peace fled the neighbourhood; the most treacherous arts were used to induce persons to desert their Minister; he was called "a denier of his Saviour;" and when one honest man refused to sign a document against him, he was told, "that he would yet sign it with his blood!" All their arts could not detach the mass of the people from a mild and virtuous pastor; and the Presbytery of Dromore actually sent preachers into his meeting-house, who harangued a mixed mob from one of the pews: and, in order to guard his very pulpit from intrusion, he was sometimes compelled to remain in it until eight or nine o'clock, on the Lord's day! Waxing bolder from the forbearance of a peculiarly peaceful man, his opponents twice *broke* open the doors of his meeting-house; and he has been compelled to bring a legal action against them for assault and violence! And of these things, the Synod "highly approve!" That is, they highly approve of

persecuting an unoffending brother "for righteousness sake." Poor Mr. Arnold ! a volume would not detail the petty annoyances, the unprincipled slanders, the personal assaults, and the various persecutions, to which he has been subjected for the last three years. And, yet, in point of sound learning, sterling integrity, and moral worth, he is superior to the entire host of his persecutors.

Let it not be said, that the Synod ordered legal proceedings to secure the civil rights of the methodists and others, who still adhere to them. Early in the business, Mr. Arnold proposed, in the spirit of christian equity to give to those who were discontented with his ministry the full arbitrated value, of all property which they could claim in the Meeting-house of Warrenpoint: but this proposition they rejected with scorn; relying, doubtless, upon being enabled to send him and his congregation adrift upon the world, through "the countenance and assistance of the General Synod."

The Orthodox Ed tor threatens to expose some of "the sayings of the Deputation, in London." The Deputation equally despise the threat and the threatener. Their characters, morally speaking, are above reproach: and their words have ever been the language of truth. So far from adding the colouring of party even, to any of their wrongs, they rather suppressed some of the most shocking scenes of intrigue and violence by which the Remonstrants have been injured; well knowing, that they would have brought suspicion upon their *own veracity*, by detailing all the revolting facts, which have disgraced the General Synod, through its worthless leaders.

They desired to live in peace; but this new quarrel has been *forced* upon them: and, they entreat the public to bear in mind, that in this, as in the entire progress of their unhappy disputes, they have only *stood upon the defensive*. Strong in conscious rectitude, and still stronger in a good cause, they personally, neither court nor shun the attacks of their opponents: but, for the sake of Christianity, they do wish for an end of clerical animosity and contention.

As a matter of justice, I demand the insertion of this article in "*The Orthodox Presbyterian*." His attack has obtained currency in the pages of *The Bible Christian*; and I seek the like measure of equity at his hands.

ONE OF THE DEPUTATION.

Intelligence.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SCOTTISH UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, AT ITS ANNIVERSARY MEETING, HELD IN GLASGOW, ON SUNDAY AND MONDAY, 2D AND 3D OCTOBER.

We gladly refer our readers to the proceedings of this society, advertised on the cover of our present number, and already published in "*the Christian Pioneer*." We have the pleasure of knowing the Rev. Henry Clarke, of Lancashire, who preached the morn-

ing sermon, and the name of the Rev. Fletcher Blakely, of Moneyrea, who preached in the middle of the day, and also in the evening, is familiar to the generality of our readers. Their powerful discourses, we learn, gave unanimous satisfaction to the members of the association, and made a deep impression upon very crowded congregations. While we regret that their interesting and eloquent speeches, delivered on Monday, have not appeared, nor those of the Rev. George Harris, we rejoice that the addresses of our young countrymen, the Rev. W. Smith of Dundee, and the Rev. B. T. Stannus, of Edinburgh, have been given at length. They will be read with profit and pleasure. The editor of the *Pioneer*, in a letter to a friend, speaking of Mr. Clarke, Mr. Blakely, and Mr. Harris, says, "I could not get their addresses in, nor was it necessary. They can afford to be left out; but young men entering upon public life, should not be neglected." He is right. We much admire the address of Mr. Barr and Mr. Robert Hedderwick; and the one delivered by the Rev. A. McDonald, of Greenock, should be read by every Calvinist.

From the *Pioneer*, we give, for the present, the following extract:

"The meeting was also addressed by Messrs. Davidson, Blyth, and Hedderwick, of Glasgow; by Mr. Burns of Saltcoates, on moving the 9th Resolution, which, as well as the various others proposed by the President, was unanimously and warmly adopted; by Mr. Clarke, on his health being given in connection with the Missionary enterprise; by Messrs. Smith and Stannus; and by Mr. Blakely. The 6th Resolution, which expressed the sympathy of the meeting with the struggles of our Irish brethren, and which specially noticed the labours of the Pastor of Moneyrea, and welcomed his arrival in Scotland, called forth bursts of approbation, which must have cheered the heart of our indefatigable friend. His reply was forcible and eloquent, and was received, as well as his remarks on proposing "Our female Unitarian friends," in a manner which must have been highly gratifying to one, who, for so long a period, has had to combat with difficulty and obloquy in the advocacy of Christian liberty and truth."

EDITORS.

THE REV. DR. DRUMMOND'S SYNODICAL SERMON.

This distinguished divine has favoured the Christian community with another of his eloquent discourses. It is above our praise, but cannot be too soon consulted by the advocates of free and fearless examination. We recommend it most seriously to the perusal of every man who prefers Christ to Calvin or Athanasius.

EDITORS.

THE REV. EDWARD IRVING, HIS PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES.

THE above-named Reverend declaimer, who figured in May-street Church, in this town, about twelve months ago, as a Teacher of pure Orthodoxy, and no doubt as partaking of a *Common Faith* with those who brought him hither, has lately been astonishing the good people of London with such exhibitions as the following:

"On Sunday the Rev. E. Irving delivered two sermons on the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, on each of which occasions the congregation was disturbed by individuals pretending to the miraculous gifts of tongues. During the sermon in the morning, a lady thus singularly endowed, was compelled to retire to the vestry, where she was unable (as she herself says) to restrain herself, and spoke for some time in the unknown tongue, to the great surprise of the congregation, who did not seem prepared for the exhibition. The Rev. Gentleman resumed the subject in the evening, by discoursing from, (or rather expounding) the 12th chapter of the 1st Corinthians. Towards the conclusion of the exposition, he took occasion to allude to the circumstance of the morning, and expressed his doubts whether he had done right in restraining the exercise of the gift in the church itself, and compelling the lady to retire to the vestry. At this moment, a gentleman in the gallery, (a Mr. Taplin, who keeps an academy in Castle-street, Holborn,) rose from his seat, and commenced a violent harangue in the unknown tongue. The confusion occasioned was extreme. The whole congregation rose from their seats in affright. Several ladies screamed aloud, and others rushed to the doors. Some supposed that the building was in danger, others that there had either been a murder, or an attempt to murder some person in the gallery, in-somuch that one gentleman actually called out to the pew-opener and beadle to 'Stop him and not let him escape.' On both occasions the church was extremely crowded (particularly so in the evening,) and it would be impossible to describe the confusion produced by the display of fanaticism. There was, indeed, in the strange unearthly sound and extraordinary power of voice, enough to appal the heart of the most stout-hearted. A great part of the congregation standing upon the seats, to ascertain the cause of alarm, while the Rev. Gentleman, standing with arms extended, and occasionally beckoning them to silence, formed a scene which perhaps partook as much of the ridiculous as of the sublime. No attempt was made to stop the individual, and after two or three minutes he became exhausted and sat down, and then the Rev. Gentleman concluded the service. Many were so alarmed, and others so disgusted, that they did not return again into the church; others formed themselves into groups in the entry of the church, and discussed the propriety of the Rev. Gentleman's suffering the exhibition; and altogether a sensation was produced which will not soon be forgotten by those who were present."

These blasphemous ravings have been defended by the *Rev. Nicholas Armstrong*, a minister of the Established Church, a leading member of the Reformation Society, and the chief agent in breaking up a meeting in London, for the support of the *Starving Irish*.

To such a deplorable state is misnamed Orthodoxy reducing the profession of Christianity amongst the Saints of modern days. We may shortly expect to hear of "*the gift of tongues*" in Belfast.

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[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

THE BIBLE.

THE perfect sufficiency of Scripture, independent of all traditions, is one of the great bases of Protestantism. This ground was firmly taken by the primitive reformers, when an attempt was made to distract men's minds, and to impose upon them a divided allegiance, by setting up human authority, in matters of faith, as, at least, a rival, if not paramount, to Revelation. The sufficiency of scripture is also one of the great principles of the Remonstrant body. This ground was taken by them, when the exclusionists of the Synod of Ulster performed the retrograde movement of nullifying the progress of mental freedom during three centuries, by leading men back to their former state of slavish submission to human authority, and imposing upon them, under the forms of creeds and confessions, the necessity of recognizing tradition, and holding the opinions of fallible men in equal esteem and reverence with the immediate inspiration of God. With this principle I heartily concur. I believe that the sacred Scriptures contain all and every of the essentials of salvation; and also that the exercise of the private judgment of every individual in society, in ascertaining these essentials, is an indefeasible right, over which no human being has any just authority; for, as the individual is alone responsible for the use of his talents, and as his interests alone are advanced or prejudiced thereby, he, alone, has the right of directing their application, or of prescribing for himself modes of faith. All coercive interference is not only unjust and unwarrantable, but dangerous to his eternal interest; since, owing to the fallibility of all human judgments, there are as many chances that the obtruded opinions may be erroneous, as there are that they may

be correct. "Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind," and let him form his faith and conduct in such accordance with the Holy Scriptures, as the unbiassed exercise of the judgment God has given him will warrant and approve.

The Bible is the sure ground and only guide of faith. Since, then, that book exercises so awful an influence, it becomes important that nothing should interfere with its operation, or detract from its efficiency. To profit by the directions, it is necessary that we confide in the intelligence of a guide; and implicit reliance upon the skill and integrity of a physician, is scarcely less requisite than an attentive observance of his prescriptions. Being fully persuaded of the origin and authenticity of Revelation, as contained in the Bible, it becomes our duty to receive that book, with single-hearted submission, as the guide of our faith and conduct; and altho' we be fully aware of the fact of its perfect sufficiency in all things, yet it is impossible that we can derive from it all that advantage which it is capable of imparting, unless we regard it with that confidence and holy reverence to which it is entitled by its divine nature.

The truth of this is evident, and is universally acknowledged. But while it meets with the assent of all Christians, it is a matter of surprise, that it is diametrically opposed to their general conduct. While it is acknowledged that there is no book half so important, it is also the fact, that there is no book so much neglected, or treated with such disrespect. Alexander the Great, to evince his reverence and love for the poems of Homer, had them deposited in a casquet of gold and gems. Is the book of life so far inferior even to the most sublime of profane compositions, that it should meet with less respect from those whom it is calculated to benefit eternally? I do not wish it to be kept in such a costly repository, but while its precepts are harboured in the hearts, its divine nature should secure it the reverence of its readers, and preserve it from disrespect and indecent familiarity. It is related of one of the Edwards, that seeing a Bible converted by one of his companions into a stool to stand upon, he indignantly took it up, kissed it, and laid it on the table. How would the young prince be shocked, were he to witness the dismissal of schools in which this book is used; to see it converted

by some of the scholars into a club or missile with which to wreak their ill humours upon each other; or did he know that, in some families, the common, and, to them, legitimate use of the Family Bible, is to serve as a cushion, by which to elevate the junior members to a level with the table? Yet these things, the crowned Saint would have witnessed pretty frequently had he lived in our times.

The mere fact that the object of the Bible is the salvation of souls, should be sufficient to make men regard it seriously; but, keeping out of view its eternal truths, it has other claims upon our admiration and our love. In an historical point of view, it is invaluable, as it furnishes us with authentic history at a period of which no other chronicles are extant. In point of morals, it furnishes, us with the purest and most amiable system of morality, founded upon the exigencies and sympathies of humanity. To the calm enquirer into the nature of man, it presents copious data in its valuable and authentic sketches of character, in every shade and posture, in all situations of life, and operated upon by all passions, feelings and motives. We have, in it, analyses of mind, which, as they are fully authenticated, give us a powerful key to the nature, and liabilities, and habitudes of men. In a merely literary light, it is the most perfect work that we possess; comprising, as it does, every excellence which renders literature valuable. In grandeur and sublimity, in dignity, simplicity, power, pathos, poetry and beauty, it is rich, even to excess. In these qualities, it defies all human competition. The grief of Priam over Hector, sinks into nothingness compared with the lament of David over Absalom. The apathy of the Stoics yields to the patient and even grateful endurance of Job. The sublimity of even the grandest passages of the grandest poets, appears petty and insignificant, compared to those passages where the subject is the great and beneficent spirit of the universe. Whether he is represented clothed with majesty and armed with power, as when, from the chaotic confusion of ante-mundane darkness, a simple act of volition was followed by an immediate creation of an order and economy, to our eyes bearing the impress of infinite elaboration and care, or whether he is pictured by the Psalmist, when

“ On seraph and on seraphim,
 Right royally he rode ;
 And, on the wings of mighty winds
 Came flying all abroad ;”

in every situation where God is introduced, the style approaches nearer to the subject than any other effort of man possibly could do.

With all these advantages, which concur to place it, in point of interest and attraction, incomparably above all other productions, it is a matter of regret that it is neglected and abused. Even excluding the absolute and imperative necessity that there is for its perfect study in forming opinions of faith and modes of conduct—keeping out of view entirely, the grand and distinguishing province of the Bible, it is wonderful that its merely literary excellencies do not secure for it an attentive perusal ; but when we consider its eternal importance, our wonder gives place to a painful feeling of fear and regret. The very things which are sought for with avidity, elsewhere, are shunned and neglected, if they appear in the Bible. History is generally looked upon as a profitable and interesting study ; but history, more profitable and more interesting than any other, is neglected. Travels are generally admired for the variety of incident and description with which they abound. The Bible abounds with both ; but its abundance will not secure it readers. Poetry is truly looked upon as one of the most refined delights of life—Every poetic excellence is found in perfection in that Book, and its beauties are plagiarized and profaned by poets ; and yet the readers of poetry are not, generally, readers of the Bible. Stories and novels are sought for eagerly to amuse—the Bible is full of subjects, highly characterized in romance of situation, and infinitely more interesting and beautiful than the Arabian tales, or any other production of this class, and yet the admirers of this class are not admirers of the Bible. The calmly serious of mankind delight in aphorisms, and maxims, and moral sentiments. These are found in the greatest plenty and perfection in that Book, and yet the admirers of La Rochefoucault and Rousseau—the calmly serious of mankind, are not, generally, readers of the Bible. There are men of visionary and speculative minds, who delight in vain attempts at piercing into the gloom of futurity, at penetrating the mys-

teries of the present, and exploring the lurking probabilities in the chaotic arcana of a past eternity. With what labour and perseverance they con over the visions of Plato, the mysteries of Kant and Berkeley, and the effects, independent of causes, in Hume; but in vain. There is but one Book which treats of the past, the present, and the future, fully, as perfection can be considered, clearly, as mystery may be explained, definitely, as any thing infinite may be expounded. There is but one Book, which tells us whence we are, what we are, and whither we are journeying—which declares to man, in the language of truth and certainty, his origin, his dependence, and the conditions of his future prospects. Here all doubts are removed, in this Book every thing is made sure—but the speculators, visionaries and theorists, are not readers of the Bible. Books of medicine, and scientific opinions on patent medicines, are consulted with eager earnestness by those who labour under bodily ailments—with how much greater earnestness would they seek after a remedy for an eternal disease, more excruciating in suffering, as it is more permanent in duration, than any temporary malady? How perseveringly would they labour for a Catholicon which would heal all their disquietudes, both in time and eternity? Here is the Catholicon, the alkahest of pain and misery, the universal panacea, which, though it does not eradicate pain, here, yet deprives it of half its anguish, through confiding patience and submission; and ensures to the patient, who uses it, spiritual health and happiness throughout eternity. Here is this talisman of mighty power both here and after; but the seekers after temporal comforts, and the epicures impatient of pain, are not readers of the Bible. In these pursuits all men are interested: Among these things mankind are divided: With these things both young and old are universally employed: but the young and old are not universally readers of the Bible. Possessing, as it does, every qualification to render it popular, it, nevertheless, is perfectly the reverse. Attractive in every point of view, it is shunned and disliked; looked upon, with feelings resembling those with which we regard the parish stocks, as a necessary dread, *in terrorem*, but no object of agreeable association and regard. This is the fact. We would endeavour to ascertain the cause; and although

at first sight it may appear rather difficult to reconcile this anomaly, yet it is easily explained.

“Familiarity,” says Chesterfield, “breeds contempt;” and if the constant use of this Book, with plates, as a toy for children, or the still more constant use of it as a common lesson book, does not produce contempt for the Bible, yet the idea of importance attached to it raises it but slightly above that feeling, and combining with it awe and fear, engenders dislike, if not abhorrence. The perpetual use made of it by children, must greatly diminish their respect, and entirely destroy their reverence for that book. This, of itself, would eventually lessen its importance in their eyes, and deter them from recurring to it at a future period of their lives.

Again, it not unfrequently happens in some families, that while the children are turning over the leaves or looking at the pictures, they are warned not to laugh nor be frivolous. Here it is used as a bugbear, and they afterwards look upon it as associated with restraint, and consequently regard it with a feeling of dislike.

How frequently does it occur, in families where zeal preponderates over judgment, that while the parents are seated at the fire reading this book, the children are placed around the table in silent mockery, mistaken for attention. They are withheld from moving by the injunctions of their parents. Cold and perhaps sleepy, they are obliged to listen, and the slightest inattention or whisper is severely punished. There may be but one child, and he sits on his stool before the fire and falls asleep and is crossly aroused and commanded to listen to what, by reason of his years, he does not comprehend. The parts most interesting to him, Daniel and the lion’s den, for instance, and others, are not selected, but the epistle of Paul or some other parts; to the child equally uninteresting. Silence is the great command, and the naturally inquisitive nature of the child is repressed and a painful attention imposed, than which nothing can be more irksome or disagreeable. Perhaps the parent peruses the volume in silence, and then the children are forbidden to speak or make a noise, lest they should occasion any disturbance. Not unfrequently, if the child can read, he is commanded to read aloud, at a time when he wishes to play, and he is told that he shall be permitted to amuse himself after finishing the chapter.

In cases of misbehaviour, frequently the punishment awarded is the imposition of a task, and some twenty or thirty verses must be committed to memory. The Bible, in this case, is an instrument of punishment; in the preceding it was a means of restraint. In schools, again, strict discipline must be enforced, and silence and order preserved, while the Bible is the task-book of the poor little tremblers, who frequently undergo corporeal punishment, on account of their errors in repeating the prescribed verses, or their inaccuracy in remembering the precise references. Punishment is sometimes evaded by excuses, and after the culprit is tempted to tear out a number of leaves in order that he may cover his inattention by saying that the place was not in his book—the lie incurs additional chastisement, and the Bible is regarded as the cause of all. How earnest is the wish of some of them, that there had been no such thing as books; and to counteract the circumstance, as far as possible, they remedy it by throwing them into a river or otherwise destroying them.

The whole tendency of this is evil. Every scholar has a deadly hostility to a cane, and cannot tolerate the idea of a birch. In nine cases out of ten, when he leaves school, he makes a determination never again to open a school-book, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, he religiously keeps it. Hence it is that the Bible is so much neglected. Familiarity occasions indifference, and restriction and corporeal pain and suffering create aversion and disgust.

It signifies nothing to say that after they get more sense they return to it again with better feelings. It is generally late in life, if at all, that they overcome their antipathy to it; and in this, above all other concerns, delay is dangerous,

It may be said, that one cause of its neglect, is, that the truths it contains are unpalatable to many, and its precepts are at variance with the pleasures of the world. This must be acknowledged; but should not we labour to do away with all objections to it, and is not this one cause quite sufficient, without throwing another obstacle in the way of its promulgation, by engendering in the young a rooted aversion to it, which they cannot readily shake off, by means of a mistaken and a pernicious system of education.

From all these observations, I am disposed to conclude, that the reason why the Bible is read, but seldom even as a duty, scarcely ever as a pleasure, arises from an injudicious system of education, public and private. I hold it as an established truth, that instruments of punishment must excite our aversion. The Bible, therefore, should never be read as an instrument of punishment, nor as a bugbear, by which to frighten children into a cold and irksome propriety. It is a desecration of its high and holy office, and an infallible mode of exciting towards it dislike instead of love.

It may be asked, "Would I wish it to be a sealed book to children?" I answer, no. It abounds with passages capable of exciting in them the highest interest; and the simple and prominent truths contained in it, are admirably calculated to sink deep into the heart of the young. The great truth of man's dependence, and of God's unceasing willingness to protect, and continued kindness, will apply with wondrous aptitude to the confiding and helpless reliance of childhood, and will excite their sympathy and love. But let it be used as a reward, not as a punishment. Present it with an aspect of attraction, not of repulsion; and it will be regarded with love in childhood. As the understanding ripens, its truths will expand, and open up wider fields for their investigation, and exhibit grounds for their high regard. It will be looked upon with reverence in youth, and as its truths are demonstrated by the experience of life, and its necessity declared by the exigencies of man, and its justice vindicated by the economy of nature, it will dwell in holy confidence and trust in the hearts of the old; and what has delighted them in infancy, and instructed them in youth will console and cheer them in age; they will revert to it, not as to a new acquaintance, but as to an old friend, in whose willingness to do them good they have the firmest reliance, and whose ability to assist they have a thousand times tried and never found wanting. How much better would such a system be, than the present, in which the Bible is forced upon the child as a repulsive encumbrance. He throws it off with the other trammels of his non-age. He may return to it again in the decline of life; but not having an early love for it, he had not recourse to it in his youth, and was thereby deprived of a steady friend and able

adviser, during the bustling and active business of that season, which, from its temptations and jarrings most especially requires it.

Such a mode of treatment would lead an individual, by pleasant paths, to a knowledge of the Bible. That such a knowledge would be of incalculable service to every one requires no elaborate proof. That such a knowledge possessed by every one would be for the good of the whole community and for the world is evident. The laws which are most just and profitable for private persons, when extended, are found most beneficial for society; and the true interests of states can be best advanced by those virtues, which lead to the temporal and eternal happiness of the individual.

AN ORTHODOX REMONSTRANT.

LETTER TO THE REV. ROBERT MAGILL, OF
ANTRIM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—Should you deem the following Letter worthy of a place in your Periodical, it is at your service. It was sent to the Rev. Gentleman, to whom it is addressed, by post; but he did not think fit to make any reply to it, during the opportunity he afterwards had. It was not originally written with the intention of being published.

A UNITARIAN LAYMAN.

(*To the Rev. Robert Magill.*)

REV. SIR,—The following remarks are occasioned by the challenge which you made, in the sermon which you preached in Ballyrobin, on last Lord's-day, in which you defied any person to produce an argument against the doctrine you were then inculcating. As you could not imagine, that any person would be so rude, as to interrupt you, while preaching; and as you called so vehemently for objections, and afterwards appointed another Sabbath day, on which you would preach in the same neighbourhood, I take it for granted, that you are desirous of finding out what objections any of

your audience would make, that you may have an opportunity of confuting them, when you return.

Having many serious doubts, with regard to the truth and Scripturality of the doctrine of the Trinity, I believe myself called on to come forward ; hoping you will not be displeased, if I take the liberty of stating my sentiments, in as plain and free a manner as I can, and offering a few arguments, which appear to me to militate against some of the doctrines which you so strenuously advocate, and of which, I should be much gratified to hear your explanation.

Though I have not the honour of being a clergyman, yet, I claim to myself the right of examining the doctrines which you, or any other person, may inculcate ; and of comparing them with the Scriptures. This is a liberty, however, which, I have reason to believe, you would not allow laymen to exercise, as is evident by your preaching and conduct on many occasions ; yet, I imagine, you would scarcely have the hardihood to say, expressly you would not, to any enlightened audience. You will not deny, however, that at times, when you understand that some of your flock are likely to have an opportunity of hearing a Unitarian clergyman, that you become dreadfully alarmed, and use every influence in your power to restrain them from going to hear. You present to them, in order to frighten them, certain doctrines, which you dress up in odious clothing, and which, you declare, belong to your Remonstrant fellow-christians, giving them the mild appellation of “damnable heresies ;” but you dare not permit them to go and hear, whether such doctrines are really preached, or, whether they are so hideous as you represent them. What, must disinterested persons suppose, are your motives for hindering them to hear men, whose minds are not bound by your shackles, but who fearlessly exercise “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free ?” Must they not naturally think, that you are afraid, lest your hearers should perceive that you had all along been misrepresenting the doctrines and characters of the Remonstrants ; a circumstance by which their allegiance to you might be shaken, and they might be led to desert you ? Do you imagine that you act candidly and nobly, by holding the minds of the people under your care, in bondage ? Is it necessary for you to wax up their ears, as Ulysses

did those of his companions, in order to escape the fatal allurements of the Syrens? You assert, that "Christ has placed you, a watchman, on Sion's towers." Does the truth of Christ require human guards and sentinels to defend it? Is it such a tender plant, that it could be blasted by a Unitarian sermon? I should fear, that anything which required to be concealed, and, which could not endure the light of day, was not genuine. How does your conduct agree with such texts of Scripture as the following: "Prove all things,"—"Search the Scriptures"—"Judge ye," &c. Besides, where is your consistency in vapouring before your hearers, and shouting for Unitarians to come forward, in the middle of your sermon, when they would be subject to church censure; or, at least, to your severe displeasure, should they go to hear any of that denomination preach? When you come to preach, you will please inform your audience how far you would allow them to use their understandings, in proving the truth of the doctrines which you teach.

Another thing, which I should be happy to hear you explain, is, how you are sure that your views of Scripture doctrines, amid such a variety of views, are right? It is most reasonable, that you should stand forward, and declare how you have arrived at *absolute certainty*, in order to justify your conduct, in condemning the conscientious opinions, and your joining in the persecution of clergymen, possessed of as sound judgments, and as learned and wise, and perhaps as good, as yourself. You have thus given arguments to your Remonstrant brethren, in favour of the truth of the doctrines they hold, which you cannot produce in favour of yours. How were they tempted to compromise their principles, as I fear many who now oppose them most vigorously, have done, by being subjected to worldly loss, to mortal anxieties, and to the misrepresentations of every intolerant bigot! Have you such texts to advance in favour of the truth of your principles? No; you have assertions in abundance; but these are 'stubborn facts,' which will ever stand against *you*, as much as they do in *their* favour. There is, I fear, no way left for you to prove your certainty, but by alleging, that you have got an immediate commission from Heaven; but this you will be required to prove, by working miracles, in order to obtain public credence.

In your public preaching, you seem rather to command your hearers to believe, than to convince their judgments, by sound reasoning and candid investigation. The assent of the mind, you are well aware, depends, solely, upon the nature and degrees of testimony. Belief must vary, as testimony varies. It is really absurd, to suppose that a person could believe what he pleases, by a simple act of volition. Until you can, therefore, produce as much direct testimony, or plain arguments deduced from scripture, as will overturn the following general arguments against the doctrine of the Trinity, you cannot reasonably expect that I could believe your assertions, unless you can convince me, that *you* are better authority than the scriptures.

1st. The doctrine of the Trinity is not *directly* revealed in the Scriptures: so, too, says Mr. Carlile, a Trinitarian clergyman; and let any person, who says that it is directly revealed, shew where. But, a great many texts of Scripture, *directly* assert a doctrine, the very contrary; as,—“God is one;”—“There is but one God,—the FATHER, *and* one Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man:”—and Christ himself calls his Father, “the *only* true God;” and has affirmed, that, “his Father is greater than all.” &c. &c.

2d.—There are at least, a thousand texts, expressly declaring that Christ is inferior to the Father. Let *one* be produced, that directly, and in language which is not figurative, or that is not modified by those texts which either precede or follow after it, which directly asserts his equality with the Father. Some have so little candour, as to quote Hebrews, 1st. chapter, and 8th. verse, and pass over the 9th verse: or John, 10th chapter and 30th verse, which is figurative, without taking along with it, the explanation which Christ gives of it himself, in the 36th verse of the same chapter; or, of reading along with it, John, 17th chapter, and 11th, 21st and 23d verses.

3d.—There is no direct scripture testimony, proving that Christ was possessed of “two distinct natures.” It is, evidently, a chimera, deduced by inference to get rid of the myriads of texts of scripture which assert the doctrine, of the Son’s subordination to the Father. The Trinitarian asserts, that “Christ was both God and man in *two* distinct natures in *one* person”!!! The

scriptures assert, that he is the Mediator *between* God and man."

4th—The doctrine of the Trinity, is rendered doubtful, by the manner its advocate takes to support it; such as, by keeping it aloof from the light of reason; by maintaining it by clamour, and theatrical gesticulations; by calling names, reviling and persecuting as far as in their power, those who deny the doctrine; and by talking, with apparent satisfaction, of the eternal torments, which they take the liberty to declare, are awaiting their opponents.

5th—The Unitarian, on the contrary, makes his principles credible, by the humble christian manner, in which he preaches them to his hearers. He takes the scriptures alone, for his rule and guide: he exercises his reason, in searching into the truths which they contain; and appeals to the reason and understanding of his audience: and while he firmly believes, that the doctrines he holds are in perfect accordance with the Scriptures, he supposes that he may err, and on that account, and in conformity with the feelings of humanity and love which Christ taught, he does not return railing for railing, nor dares to insult Heaven, by ascribing everlasting torments to those who do not think as he does, in matters of faith.

Such, Rev. Sir, are some of the objections which cause me to dissent from you. I could produce many others, but the bounds which I have at present prescribed to myself will not permit. They remain, however, for your confutation. Yours truly.

A UNITARIAN LAYMAN.

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN EDGAR.

SIR,—In *The Bible Christian*, for September last, I pretty sharply rebuked the arrogant intolerance of "*The Continental Society*," and exposed, in particular, some of your own pompous and boastful misrepresentations. Perhaps I felt more keenly, and expressed myself more warmly, than any statements of *such* men could properly warrant; yet, I have not been convinced by all the maudlin charity and refined sentimentality of my friend

MELANCTHON, that it is improper to feel indignant at injustice, or to expose the malice which, under the guise of religion, endeavours to ruin conscientious and unoffending Christians. It is very easy for those who bask in the sunshine of prosperity, to deliver flowery harangues concerning fortitude in adversity; and I strongly suspect, that it is thus, Melancthon declaims about the exercise of meekness and charity towards revilers and persecutors of the brethren. We find none of this mawkish tenderness in the Gospel. Offences are plainly called by their appropriate names; and "woe" is denounced upon Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," without ceremony or reserve. It may be alleged, indeed, that *we* cannot sufficiently estimate motives to be qualified to pronounce judgment: but surely we are authorized "to judge of the tree by its fruits;" and it is not possible for us to believe, that any men can *honestly* endeavour to advance the cause of Christian Truth, by wilful and persevering misrepresentations. It is equally mean and disingenuous to assume a satisfied air whilst we are suffering unmerited injury; and the greatest bitterness of spirit frequently vents itself in the cant of charity. I shall not, therefore, "feign a virtue, though I have it not," but proceed to rebuke you with that wholesome severity which your offences demand.

At the Continental Society, you stated, that "the religious liberals of our own days are either avowed or secret Infidels;" and I called upon you "to come forth and state whom you meant by "religious liberals"—as, from the whole tenor of your oration, you seemed to aim your poisoned arrows at Unitarians. To this, you reply, in the last number of *The Bible Christian*, "that you neither called Unitarians avowed or (*nor*) secret infidels, nor used any expression, calculated to convey such a statement to the audience." Now, Sir, this is a satisfactory disclaimer, so far as Unitarians are concerned; and although I could prove, by unquestionable evidence, that you uttered the identical words which I have quoted, concerning "religious Liberals," I shall not press that point any farther. It may be, that you referred to some *Orthodox* Liberals, such as Dr. Tennent, James Munfod, or John Barnett, (for these are amongst the most tolerant Christians of my acquaintance,) but, how they could be "religious" and yet

“infidels,” a Professor alone is able to explain.

It is very singular, however, that whilst you disavow having applied the term “infidels” to Unitarians, you admit the use of language precisely tantamount in meaning. You candidly own, that you “did state, that Unitarianism is the high road to infidelity.” If you have stated the truth, seeing that multitudes have been travelling along this “high road,” you can readily point out the unhappy individuals of your own acquaintance, who have arrived at the fatal gaol of “infidelity.” Believe me, Sir, infidelity is too wise in its knavishness and hypocrisy, to assume the unprofitable and unfashionable garb of Unitarianism. I have seen something of it, in its most hideous form, and it has always been profoundly *Orthodox* in its bearing—grave and saturnine in deportment, sanctimonious in look, overflowing with the most approved saintly quotations, an enemy to the most innocent recreation, and ready with all needful instruments of social and ecclesiastical torture, for the punishment of “gainsayers.” Such a one lives, not a thousand miles from Belfast, who, a few years ago, declared, “that nobody but a fool could believe in the *Bible*!” You may rest assured, that this man being now orthodox, is a thorough “out-and-outer”—one who stops not at trifles, but “fools the saints to the top of their bent.” No man, Sir, will be a hypocrite to his own worldly loss; and, therefore, in these canting times, no *infidel* will profess *Unitarianism*! As, however, your own errors are sufficiently numerous, and I am not orthodox enough to make you lie under “the imputation” of another’s guilt, it is only fair to state, that the character above referred to, has no relation to you: I shall, therefore, place you at the bar of public opinion, for your personal offences.

When you stated, that “Unitarianism is the high road to infidelity,” you spoke in scandalous ignorance of history, and reason, and fact; or you wilfully maligned and misrepresented the faith of your brethren; or, without intending any great harm, you merely used “a rhetorical artifice,” to open the purse-strings of your silly audience, by horrifying them with the awful consummation of Unitarianism. I am willing to adopt the most favourable supposition; and yet, Sir, *at the best*, in how wretched a predicament do you appear before

the world? To gratify an idle vanity, or "to raise money under false pretences," you have stated, to the injury of a most respectable portion of your fellow Christians, what you know to be contrary to fact. As a Professor of Theology you *must know*, that, so far from "Unitarianism being the high road to infidelity," it has become the path of christian security and peace, to millions who were hurrying along "the broad way" of miscalled orthodoxy, to the gloomy and cheerless regions of scepticism and unbelief. It is, indeed, impossible, in the very nature of things, that Unitarianism should lead to infidelity. Accordant with the enlightened reason of man, vindicating the untainted equity and benevolence of God, honouring the Redeemer in his gracious character of Mediator, and joyfully looking forward to the final consummation of all things in righteousness and peace, it equally attracts men by the full evidence of its Divine origin, and the native loveliness of its blessed principles. It is no wonder, therefore, that in vindication of a system, thus redolent with the sanctity of Heaven, and calculated to cherish the best affections of earth, Unitarian Martyrs should have expired at the stake, and that Unitarian Confessors have thrown up the splendid honours and emoluments of the world, and finished their truly christian career, amidst unmerited obloquy and severe privations! Neither is it surprising, that the ablest and most intrepid advocates of the divine authority of Christianity, should have been found in the ranks of Unitarianism. *Lardner* in his unparalleled Work—"The Credibility of the Gospel History"—has displayed talent, research, and erudition, which, if divided amongst the members of your Orthodox Synods, would outweigh the entire stock at present in their possession. Did you think of *him*, Sir, when you dared to speak of Unitarianism as being the high road to infidelity? Or, had you ever heard the names of *Priestly*, *Lindsey*, *Jebb*, *Belsham*, *Cappe*, and a host of others, who so gloriously defended the religion of Jesus from the attacks of Unbelievers, and so nobly evinced the sincerity of their faith by the magnitude of their sacrifices?

But, Sir, I leave names, and generalities, and tendencies, though all in my favour, and come to *existing facts*. On this ground I take my stand, and I defy you

to dislodge me from my position : nay, I shall hurl back your accusation upon your own head, and show that Orthodoxy, and especially your Calvinistic Orthodoxy, is the fruitful parent both of fanaticism and infidelity. Whenever the intellect of a country outgrows the creeds of its churches, the headlong tendency of the enlightened portion of the nation is towards infidelity ; whilst the lower and ignorant mass are drawn into wild, unreasoning fanaticism, by the artifices of their priests, who labour to perpetuate an interested domination. Catholic Orthodoxy, which in all its worst features, resembles Calvinistic Orthodoxy, has reduced France, Spain, and Italy, to wide fields of scoffing unbelief on the one hand, and degraded superstition on the other. But to come nearer home, and to a country from which you derive your creed and discipline : look to Scotland, your boasted clime of Orthodoxy. So far as the population is Christian, with a *uniform profession of Faith* there exists every *variety of Creed*, both amongst the laity and clergy. But, besides this deplorable effect of ecclesiastical tyranny, the unscriptural dogmas of Calvinism have driven tens of thousands into rank infidelity. Enlightened minds omitting to examine Christianity in its native purity, as it is found in the Bible, take it for granted, that Calvinism is the doctrine of the Gospel ; and therefore reject an angel of light, because an unlovely child of earthly corruption has assumed her name and counterfeited her appearance. The single city of Edinburgh, the theatre of Knox's glory, the seat of the Orthodox Assembly, and the boasted home of pre-eminent Literature and Science, contains more infidels, than could be found amongst the entire Protestant population of Ireland ! There, Sir, Infidelity does not hide itself merely in the congenial abodes of debauchery and crime : it sits in the Professor's chair, it haunts the courts of Justice, it mingles with the dispensers of the healing art, it enters into the circles of fashion, and widely pervades all classes of society. Edinburgh is but a sample of what may be found in Glasgow, and indeed through every enlightened portion of the country : and, as the Scotch, generally speaking, are an educated, thinking people, down to the humblest grades of society, the common weavers and mechanics are very often discovered in the crowded ranks of infidelity.

Tell me not, that the appalling statement which I have made, is invalidated by their pharisaical observance of the Sabbath, and all the pomp, parade, and forms of devotion which are practised. The customs of the country and the interests of the world perpetuate these external decencies; but the very rigour and restraint of their Calvinistic observances have the most powerful tendency to estrange the heart from religion. With all its assumption of a heavenly origin, that which calls itself Christianity is found to be irrational in its principles, and unfavourable to rational enjoyment in its exercise. It covers the face of heaven with clouds, and casts a chilling gloom over this fair world of God's creation. The consequences are natural, though frightful. Whenever the Scotch are removed from the formalities and restraints of their native land, and placed in situations where irreligion will not stand in the way of their temporal interests, they are notoriously lax and infidel, in a greater proportion than the people of any other country upon earth. Call not this, Sir, a "Unitarian Libel:" you well know it to be the truth. But, lest you should attempt a cavil, I refer you to "The Address of the Scotch Presbytery of London, to the Baptized of the Scottish Church, in the Metropolis and its Vicinity," published about two years ago, under the immediate sanction of that truly Orthodox Divine, the Rev. Edward Irving, who erewhile enlightened the good folk of this town, in May-street Church. The Address sets forth,

1st, That, the baptized of the Scottish church, in London and its immediate vicinity amount to *one hundred thousand* individuals:

2d, That, of these, scarcely *ten thousand* are even *nominally* connected with any church:

3d, That, formerly there were *ten* places of worship, but now there are only *five*:

4th, That, the five churches have not, amongst them all, more than *one thousand* communicants: or, in other words, out of 100,000 Scotchmen, they have about as many attending upon that ordinance of religion which is peculiarly the test of a man's being a Christian, as would sit down at the Lord's Table, in one day, in several of the large Presbyterian congregations of Ulster!

The Presbytery account for this awful declension, on several grounds; but especially the four following—The

inordinate love of money: religious indifference: the adoption of Unitarian principles: and the dreadful prevalence of *Infidelity*! Read these orthodox admissions, good Professor, and venture again, if you dare, to libel Unitarianism. Sir, all history, all facts, all common sense, prove that your own darling Calvinism is the high road to infidelity. In Scotland, in England, in Ireland, in Switzerland, in Germany, *Unitarianism* has rescued tens of thousands from the gulf of Infidelity into which misnamed orthodoxy had plunged them; and arrested the progress of millions, on their downward career of scepticism and delusion. At the very moment when you were shamefully maligning a rational, benignant, scriptural faith, innumerable saints in Heaven, and multitudes of pious Christians upon earth, were rejoicing in it as the hallowed source of their felicity and their hopes!

Lest, however, the testimony of the Scotch Presbytery should be insufficient for your conversion, I shall make you acquainted with a fact, which I learned from the lips of a man of great intelligence, and as high in honour and veracity as any one that ever existed. The Scotch, you are aware, who are *tolerably* catching in all countries, have monopolized the good things of India: and, consequently, through the patronage of the East India Company's Scotch Directors, many of the sons of the Scottish clergy have obtained valuable situations in the East. My friend, who was an opulent merchant in Calcutta, "knew about thirty of these gentlemen," and solemnly declared, "that without a single exception, they were unbelievers!" Had these men travelled along the high road of Unitarianism? No; they were nursed in the very lap of orthodoxy, trained in its principles, versed in its forms, subject to its restraints—and, lo! the *fruits* of the system!

Sir, I abhor national reflections! but you have forced me to use illustrations, which, to many, may appear to be such. I owe it, however, to myself, and to many as estimable and truly Christian men and women as I have ever known, to disavow all intention of disparaging the enlightened people of Scotland. I detest the tyranny of their churches, and I dislike several of the doctrines of their creeds: but, as an intellectual and industrious nation, I heartily honour them: I know some of their Cal-

vinistic pastors and people, whose genuine piety, moral respectability, and amiable social qualities, would do honor to any country and to any church. In making this becoming admission, however, I retract not "one jot or one tittle," of what I said concerning the debasing and infidel tendencies of Calvinism. Where the people are ignorant, as they too generally are in this country, its tendency is to make fanatics and slaves : where the people are enlightened, as in Scotland and Germany, it cannot fail to produce infidelity to a large extent, amongst those who do not make religion a subject of serious personal inquiry. How can it be otherwise ? If christianity were indeed Calvinistic Orthodoxy, it seems to me almost impossible to conceive, how any unprejudiced, untrammelled, soberminded man, believing in the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, could look upon it as an emanation from Heaven. I do not say, that from education and circumstances, there are not millions of conscientious believers in Calvinism ; but I do maintain that, were it not from those causes, the rational and enlightened portion of mankind could never have adopted a creed so extraordinary, self-contradictory, and demoralizing in its tendencies.

The fundamental doctrine of Orthodoxy is directly opposed, so far as I am able to comprehend the explanations of its advocates, to the fundamental doctrine both of natural and revealed religion. The heavens, the earth, and the entire world of animated being, declare that there is but ONE GOD : the blessed volume of Revelation takes up the glorious truth, and proclaims aloud in its thousand pages, that there is but ONE GOD. Now, sir, what does Orthodoxy teach ? It teaches, that, "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God." If this be not *Tretheism*, or inculcating the doctrine of *Three Gods*, language has no meaning. Feeling, however, that ONE GOD is so clearly revealed in the Scriptures as to be incapable of denial, you plunge into the astounding difficulty of a compound Godhead, having *three distinct Persons*, all equal to each other ; and yet, each, *separately* equal to the whole *three united ! ! !* Dr. Cooke, in *The Orthodox Presbyterian* says, "he has yet to learn, that a *part* is equal to the *whole*." Now, this seems strange, as the very first principle of Orthodoxy inculcates the amazing con-

tradiction! Nor is this all, sir: your system teaches, that *Father* and *Son* are of the *same age*—the derived *Son coeval* with the underived *Father*—a Being born of a woman only 1831 years ago, *co-existent* with the eternal and uncreated God! Moreover, you teach, that the Mediator is the same Being as the Father with whom he mediates—that the sanctifying Spirit, the *Messenger* of God and Christ, is the same Being with those who send him—and that He who sojourned thirty-three years in a human body, and *died* upon the cross of Calvary, was verily and indeed, “the God who filleth heaven and earth, and who alone bath *immortality*!” Can any man wonder, sir, that a system which thus rises up in bold contradiction to itself, to common sense, and to the plainest principles of natural and revealed religion, should be the abundant source of infidelity?

If we add to this, the peculiar and deplorable doctrines of Calvinism, we shall have many other proofs of the downward, infidel tendencies of modern Orthodoxy. I have neither time nor space, at present, to expose the system in its broad and naked deformity; but, I may venture to ask, can any enlightened, unprejudiced man, who admits the justice and goodness of God, seriously believe in the doctrine of original sin, or *imputed guilt*—a doctrine which represents an unoffending child, as the object of “God’s wrath and curse,” on account of the transgression of Adam and Eve, committed 6,000 years ago? Scripture avers, that “every man shall bear his *own* burthen;” orthodoxy teaches, that he shall bear *another’s*—the Prophet of God saith, that “the child shall *not* suffer for the iniquities of his father:” Orthodoxy asserts that he *shall*—Jesus saith concerning little children, “of such is the kingdom of Heaven;” Orthodoxy maintains, that of such is the kingdom of hell!

The doctrine of predestination is equally revolting. Can those sentiments, sir, have the sanction of a just and benevolent God, which represent him as forming thousands for happiness, and millions for misery, “without any regard either to their faith or works,” and in accordance with an irresistible decree, enacted myriads of ages before they were born! To this awful doctrine which represents God as a capricious tyrant, and man as unreasoning slave—which utterly confounds virtue and vice, and makes the assassin and the saint equally the

irresponsible instruments of a fatal destiny, I may, perhaps, hereafter recur; but at present, I must content myself with thus merely alluding to what even John Calvin termed "th · horrible decree."

The doctrine of imputed righteousness, though more benevolent, is not, in my mind, more unreasonable, unjust, and unscriptural, than that of imputed guilt. It in fact, supposes a double injustice on the part of God—first, in punishing the *innocent* in the room of the *guilty*; and secondly, in permitting the guilty, entirely to escape without punishment at all. This imputes to God, what he expressly declares to be hateful in his eyes: "Lo, he that cleareth the guilty, and he that condemneth the just, are they not both an abomination in my sight, saith the Lord!"

Is it surprising then, sir, that with such revolting dogmas inculcated as the doctrines of Christianity, men of good hearts and sound heads, who have never carefully examined the Gospel for themselves, should rush headlong into unbelief? Add to this, the Calvinistic scheme of spiritual influence, and the daring familiarity with which it talks of personal inspiration and supernatural gifts, conferred upon the weak and the worthless—and you have the true secret of the prevalent infidelity of Calvinistic countries, as well as of "The Row Heresy" of Scotland, the maniac ravings of Mary Campbell and Jane Carsdale, and the disgusting blasphemies which are disgracing the Metropolis of the empire, under the patronage of Edward Irving! Beware then, Sir, of again violating the Ninth Commandment, by "bearing false witness against your neighbours," lest the weapons which you unjustly wield against others, should be fairly turned against yourself.

You adduce "*the Manchester Controversy*," as your authority, for stating, that "English Unitarians, in some places, paid persons *sixpence* a day for attending their chapels." I thought, your calumnious assertion would rest upon some such authority. It is a favourite plan with modern Orthodoxy to invent slanders, and then quote them as facts. *The Manchester Controversy* has been very useful in this way; and *The Orthodox Presbyterian*, will in a few years become a great authority in the country! If unrefuted *calumny* is to be considered as *truth*, the labours of Hercules were but

child's play, in comparison with the tasks which Orthodoxy would impose upon Unitarianism, in vindication of its character!

I remain, Sir, with a determined hostility towards your religious opinions, but without one particle of personal enmity towards yourself,

A UNITARIAN.

Belfast, October, 1831.

CONTINUATION OF AN ESSAY ON EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

[FROM PAGE 205.]

THIS, then, is the simple result of our religion—that love of God which leads to obedience. If, therefore, we can inspire our children with this sentiment, and give them a practical understanding of the Christian law of duty, we have a sufficient basis for a Christian character. Let us, then, confine ourselves to these two purposes, and strive to accommodate our instructions to their capacity of understanding, always bearing in mind the natural developement of their faculties, and the firm principle of improvement on which we depend in teaching them any other subject. Whatever religious impressions we attempt to make on their minds without reference to these points, either by narratives from the bible, or otherwise, tend to confuse them, and are detrimental. If this view be correct, we see that all the ‘distinguishing doctrines,’ as they are called, are alike unfit for our purpose. Even the acknowledged attributes of God must be unfolded to children gradually, and as we see they are needed to promote our ultimate design. By an injudicious use of truth, we may do as much injury as by false representations. By teaching truths really adapted to their age and wants, without a full consideration of the impression which associated circumstances will cause them to make on their minds, we may likewise defeat our own purposes.

For instance, if we first give children a sense of God's omnipresence, to alarm them, this truth will not aid our endeavours to make them love him; whereas,

by making it their protection in fearful circumstances, or their encouragement in well-doing, it will become a welcome and endearing truth. Our first object, as we have said, is to inspire a love of God. Then let our representations of his character be such as shall be captivating to the imagination of childhood. We must watch and improve every opportunity to create a decidedly pleasing idea of God in the child's mind. It need not be an idea which would bear the test of metaphysical demonstration. It need not be free from associations of human form and person; for the child will give the human or some other form to God. We must not feel as if we degraded the subject when we suffer it to be thus accommodated to the infancy of life. Is it not by the images of sensible objects that the invisible things of God and heaven are communicated to men? When all the gorgeous imagery of the new Jerusalem—gold, sapphire, and precious stones, is used to describe to us the heavenly country, as better calculated to impress us with a sense of its surpassing beauty, than any delineations of a spiritual would be; shall we hesitate to apply the same method to the child's understanding? Will a being, who can as yet scarcely perceive the pre-eminence of truth over falsehood, receive any very captivating impression of God by being told of his moral perfections? But it may be said, our first teaching is of his care. We would ask if even this may not be premature, so long as the very young child can conceive of no other agency in its supplies, than that of its earthly parents? We do indeed, forget in the matter, that our children are progressive beings; that the knowledge we wish to give them must be communicated by little and little; that its gradual development must be nicely adjusted to their opening faculties; that their imagination is first to be addressed, their affections next; and that the conscience and understanding are objects of later culture.

One of the first opportunities that a parent has, to communicate the idea of God to her child, is suggested by the child itself. Among its earliest delights are flowers. It reaches with avidity towards a blossom, and when possessed tears it in pieces, with what seems to us senseless folly; and we wonder, that desiring it so much, it values it so little. But the child is wiser in

his generation than we, and takes his enjoyment of the flower in the only way it can yield him pleasure. By and by, he holds it in his hand for a long time, or sticks it in his shoes, or frolics about, wearing it as an enviable decoration. But soon a new capacity begins to dawn, and he says, "who made this flower?" It is well if in our answer we can confine ourselves to the suggestion of wisdom intimated by the question; and when again he demands—"who is God"? refrain from such a description of his works as shall overawe the little mind of the being that is now to receive its first impression. How natural to say—he made the sun and moon, and the sky, the earth, and every thing you can see! And yet how injudicious! since at no age is the idea of inconceivable unattended by dread. No; let the rose content us; it is enough. You may satisfy his curiosity to know how he made it, without being able to satisfy your own. Tell him that God made him; and he made the rose to give him pleasure. That he made it grow out of the ground; for God can do such things, though men and women cannot. Show him the beautiful colour of the blossom, and tell him that no man could paint it so; but that God puts all these colors in the air, and that there he makes them shine on the leaves and flowers, just as he thinks it best for their beauty, giving to some flowers one color, and to others another. Tell him, too, that he gives the flowers their different odours, just as he gives them their colors, and does it all to please us. The material world furnishes the child with his first wonders, and furnishes you with ample materials for giving him pleasing impressions of its Maker. Aim at nothing further until this is done. It will prove the best foundation of filial love. And though it seem to you but a glimpse of his least magnificent attribute, and conveyed in language all unworthy of the subject, yet you may recollect that it is all the child can comprehend, and that it is a ray of that light, however feeble, which shall shine more and more unto the perfect day.

Then the duties of Christianity, how are they to be inculcated? This field in early life is very narrow. One or two precepts are all we can profitably apply to young children: and perhaps we need state no other as an example, than that they 'should do to others, as

they would that others should do to them.'—This, and others like it, they can be taught to understand and practise as soon as they begin to associate with other children. But this and other principles of action should be given them, not as matters of propriety or choice, but with authority, as admitting of no appeal. As they emerge from childhood, they will become fit subjects of that 'perfect law' under whose influence their character is to acquire its true value. And here occurs the grand mistake which has always prevailed, of making this law spiritless and uninspiring, and thus unattractive to the youthful disposition. And is the genius of the Christian law such as of necessity makes it unwelcome to the natural ardour of the youthful spirit? Is the character of its great teacher really destitute of those inspiring traits, which always recommend themselves to their quick and soaring imaginations? We think in both these cases we shall find that the fault lies neither in the subject nor in the being to be affected by it, but that they naturally possess a much happier adaptation to each other, than is generally imagined. We think the subject capable of assuming a very inspiring character to the apprehensions of youth.

The rules of Christian duty should be imparted to children in strict connexion with the character of Jesus Christ. But nothing has suffered more than this very character from mean and unworthy representations. Children are told that he was meek and lowly, and this is about the extent of their notion concerning him. That it should not be very captivating, is not strange; for if they have any definite idea of these qualities, it is probably derived from some good old woman of their acquaintance, who suffers uncomplainingly, and who, though justly entitled to the praise of emulating her Saviour's spirit, is not the illustration best calculated to recommend him to their imitation or their respect. Let them but see him standing forth among men, his brow clothed with the mild majesty of the Prince of Peace, awfully unapproachable to the proud and hypocritical Pharisee from the open manliness and conscious purity which made him feel how awful goodness is,—yet saying to the sincere and timid, 'Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly of heart,' and we venture to say, that the picture and sentiment together, will awaken a

chord of pure and ardent feeling, if struck before the heart has been unstrung by perverted teaching. Let them see him invested with all power from God, and left to use it at his own pleasure. He can take the sovereignty of the world to himself. He can sway a universal sceptre over the nations. He can make kings bow, and princes yield him service, 'and exalt himself above the stars of God.' But behold! all the forms of human suffering are before him; the sick—and he can say to disease, depart! the blind—to the sightless ball he can unveil the invisible world; the afflicted—his word can raise the dead, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy; the deaf—his voice can reach the ear which never heard a sound; the lame—he can bid him walk; the lunatic—he can say to the distracted elements of his brain, peace, be still! He sees the bondage of cruel despotism blinding men's minds, and immortal souls brought under the slavery of degrading error; he can open to them the light of heavenly truth. He sees the poor without a beam of mercy to cheer their adversity, with no hope but the grave;—he can tell them of a better country, even a heavenly. He can prove to them, and to all, that the grave shall give up the dead; for he has power to lay down his own life, and he has power to take it again. His choice is made. He enters on his work. He faints not, neither is weary. He scorns to waste an effort to provide for his own comfort. Though he has not where to lay his head, it matters not—he can make thousands of pillows happy, which have been long wet with unavailing tears; and this is rest to him!

Who will say that this representation is not for the spirit of youth? It will waken an enthusiasm equal at least to any glow which ever followed the actions of the heroes of this world; and it will no longer seem to them a spiritless employment 'to go about doing good.' And then, where will you point them to a picture of the moral sublime, which shall kindle a warmer admiration than his example—the living letter of his instruction? 'Resist not evil.' No rule of his has been more abject than this. But let them see him at the close of his labours, when the crisis of his fate approached, contemplating that fate with mortal agony, as combining the most dreadful bodily torture with every wound to the spirit which an ignominious death

ever inflicted,—yet because he saw in it the consummation of his usefulness to mankind, 'going forth to meet it with a calm self-possession, unshaken by the prophetic view of all that awaited him; standing before an iniquitous judgment-seat with the noble bearing which on another occasion had cast the rough soldiers at his feet, and in the face of mockery and insult, thinking of no injury but that which those deluded and miserable beings were bringing on themselves;—and will an uncorrupted youth blush to be found imitating such an example as this? No—the principle thus carried out by him will seem to him as it is—exalted, ennobling! But it must be taught before he has learned a different lesson from the world. And with such a view of the real greatness of our Saviour's character, how will he be likely to study the thousand incidents of his life, every one of which goes to aid this glorious impression! His last interview with his disciples before he suffered, what sort of feeling will it be likely to awaken in the heart of a generous youth? Not that sickly sensibility which overflows at the detail of disappointed love or ambition. It will be a deep-toned and healthful sympathy, so full of admiration at the disinterested fortitude displayed, that, were it not for the touching tenderness of his manner to his friends, the starting tear would be of high and gratified emotion, rather than of sorrow. And are these, indeed, the emotions of which the opening heart of youth shall be ashamed? We shall search the world in vain for a subject half so inspiring. Let the young come to the contemplation of this sublime character, free from unworthy prepossessions and mean prejudices, and it will be their delight.

It is manifest that the religious teaching of our children, needs only to be subjected to a rational consideration, to become easy and efficient. And it is time to give it a chance to act on the human character, and accomplish the work whereunto it was sent. Must it be the very best subject to be delivered from the errors of former ages? Certain it is, that, until it is rightly inculcated in childhood and youth, it will never have its true influence on individuals and society. Alas! where is the heart that is subject to the pervading light

of Christianity? It does but touch the mountain tops and glance an occasional doubtful beam upon the vallies. Many are the deep ravines which never felt its cheering warmth, many the deep forests which lift an impervious barrier to its rays, and great the extent of fallow ground not yet laid open to its quickening influence.

Z.

DEATH.

[From the Christian Register.]

Lift high the curtain's drooping fold,
And let the coming sun-light in !
I would not that my heart grow cold,
Before its better years begin—
'Tis well, at such an holy hour,
So calm, so pure—a sinking ray
Should shine into the heart with power,
To drive its darker thoughts away !

The bright young thoughts of early days
Shall gather in my mem'ry now,
And not the later cares, whose trace
Is stamped so deeply on my brow—
What though these days return no more,
The sweet remembrance is not vain ;
For Heaven is waiting to restore
The childhood of my soul again.

Let no impatient mourner stand
In hollow sadness, near my bed ;
But let me rest upon that hand,
And let me hear the gentle tread
Of HER, whose kindness long ago,
And still unworn away by years,
Hath made my weary eye-lids flow
With grateful and admiring tears !

I go—but let no plaintive tone
The moment's grief of friendship tell ;
And let no proud or graven stone,
Say where the weary slumbers well !
A few short hours—and then for Heaven !
Let sorrow all her tears dismiss,
For who would mourn a warning given
To call us from a world like this !

C. R. K.

REVIEW.

The Duty of Improvement. A Sermon, by the Rev. HENRY WARE, jun. of Boston, America; reprinted from the Liberal Preacher. London: John Mardon. 1831. pp. 22.

We are much pleased to see this excellent discourse in this shape. It speaks well for the growing taste for fervid and eloquent preaching among the Unitarians of Great Britain; and we feel under obligations to the active publisher in London for bringing it before us.

This discourse is the first of a new series of the Boston Liberal Preacher, a work, "designed," as the address states, "to recommend the truths, and promote the influence of the Gospel, by giving the public access to the pulpit writings of a class of Christians, whose views are believed to be scriptural, and their productions, serious and profitable; and at the same time, to correct the prejudices and misrepresentations with which their name and tenets are associated in many minds. At this end, it aims, by simply presenting specimens of the doctrinal and practical sermons of Unitarians, and leaving them to speak for themselves."

The work is published monthly, and each number contains one long or two short sermons.

The editor could not have commenced his new series, at the beginning of a new year, better than by giving the one at the head of this article. It is beautiful, fervid, and eloquent. The language is chaste, and glowing, the figures judicious and apt, and it has that *individuality* so essential to a pulpit oration. A note informs us, it was preached the last night of the year. His text is from Phil. 3. 13, 14. "*I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus my Lord*": and he thus opens the subject—

"The things which are *behind*, and the things which are *before* ! For so it is with us here. We are in the midst of things; not at rest, but passing onward: not at home, but travellers; not stationary inhabitants, but pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

"We are going on from stage to stage, leaving on the road one scene of business and pleasure after another, and arriving at new.

What was ours, is ours no longer. What is ours, will soon be gone from us. Behind us are our childhood, our youth, and our early homes ; our first warm loves, our first bright hopes ; our early innocence and our early sins. Before us, are the cares and trials of an unknown destiny, and the duties of an uncertain probation ; bereavement, toil, sickness, age, death, judgment : Behind us, ignorance, weakness, imperfection. Before us, knowledge, virtue, perfection—or, it may be, worse ignorance, baser sin, and loss of glory : Behind us, a few brief years. Before us, eternity."

"And as we pass onward in this unceasing progress, time numbers our steps, and marks the advancement we have made. As he rapidly strides on, he holds out his glass to us that we may note the running sands ; today as he turns it for another year, he bids us pause to look at the things that are behind, and the things that are before, and to recollect ourselves before we go further. It is well for us, a thoughtless and giddy race, that such moments arrive ; that the sun runs a circle round the earth ; and when he turns back from the extreme limit of his course, gives warning by his shortening days, of the shortening term of life ; a warning that seems to reach us in the words of our text, *Forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those which are before.*" p. 1—2.

He founds his subsequent reasoning on the axiom that it is the universal law of God that every thing in nature should conform to the law of improvement. Nothing is perfect at once ; all things are in a state of progress.

The herb, the tree, the animal spring from an insignificant beginning, and reach their perfect stature by a gradual progress.

The day does not open, nor the year burst into maturity, at once.

Look at the history of man : the antediluvian age led the way to the patriarchal ; the patriarchal was but an introduction to the Mosaic ; and the Mosaic was a preparation for the Christian, a school-master to bring us to Christ. And the Christian dispensation is one of improvement and progress.

In this last we have much to learn.

Undoubtedly, the whole of its doctrines and principles were revealed at once ; but it is only as human nature improves, and human society advances, that they can be comprehended and acted on : and it is a striking evidence of its divine origin, that the Christian religion is adapted for all ages, for all climes, and for all time.

Man's capacity for progressive improvement ; the degree of happiness and glory to which the soul shall be admitted after death, depending on the progress it has

made on earth ; the fearful thought that not to improve is to grow worse ; and, finally, the consideration, what it is to be prepared and safe ; what it is to have done the work assigned us on earth ; are subsequent branches of the preacher's discourse, all treated with eloquence, truth, and earnestness. But we must limit our observations, as we wish to give our readers the opportunity of judging from the words of the author his own thoughts. To the question—for what object has God placed man here ? he thus answers—

“ It is, in a few words, to form his character for eternity. And what is this character to be ? Holy, disinterested, and pure ; devout towards God, benevolent toward man, self-governed, and free from sin. A character of which earth has yet seen but one perfect model. After all the study, and prayers, and effort after excellence of so many good men, for centuries, the world has seen but one perfect exemplification of this character ; and that in the person of Jesus Christ—the meek and lowly, the holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin. Him we are to imitate : His character is to become ours.”

“ And is this to be done in a day, or in a year, or in many years ? Is it some very easy thing, to be accomplished by feeble exertion, at any hour, that we may be thus unconcerned about it, and so little anxious to advance in it ? Fashion to yourself what manner of man you should be, if you had the spirit of Jesus, if you had made it your great and chief concern to imitate his excellencies. Do you find yourself near to it now ? so near that you may pause, and cease to go further ? Alas, it is at a far and mortifying distance, that we follow his glorious steps ; scarcely do we seem to reflect a ray from his bright excellence. Yet *that* is our pattern. There is our business in this world. If we have done something towards it, the better reason that we should not pause in the pursuit. There are hindrances, also, in the path ; in the affairs of our calling, in the cares of business, in the pleasures and companions of our pilgrimage ; the greater, then, the reason for effort and toil, that these may not defeat the great purpose of our being. There are hindrances from our own desires, propensities, and passions ; from our weakness, irresolution, and faint-heartedness. It is not an easy task to subdue them ; and when seemingly subdued, they may rise again in unsuspected strength, and drag us back. Where, then, is the moment for pausing ? At what hour may the child of God, having such a work to do, and such obstacles to hinder him, say to himself, It is enough ; I will cease from my labour ? At what age may man, with his eye on his Maker, and his hope on heaven, lay down the staff of his pilgrimage, and say, I have attained ; I have reached the stature of my Lord, and my soul may rest from toil ?

“ Not while we have it recorded that the prince of the apostles, the inspired, the indefatigable Paul, felt himself at a distance from perfection, and feared to stop in his attainments. Not while man's life is likened in the gospel, to a race ; for he that pauses must lose

it. Not while it is called in scripture a warfare; for he that lays down his arms, or sleeps upon his post, before the warfare is accomplished, suffers for infidelity and treason. Not while sin is in the world, and temptation abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. No, the pilgrimage of duty and toil must go on, while the heart throbs and the pulse beats—without intermission, without fainting, steadily, resolutely. Through the desert, it may be; but God is there, giving water from the rock, and meat from heaven; and who, then, will faint at the prospect? In perils and straits, it may be; but God is in the midst with the cloudy pillar of his providence and grace; and who, then, will shrink from the way? Amongst enemies, in fearful and banded array, it may be; but who will tremble at their power, that is protected by the shield of faith, and armed by the sword of the spirit, and led toward the promised land by the captain of his salvation? Let the believing pilgrim then go on; without halting, without looking back, without distrust; onward, onward...till the way-worn feet stand on the borders of Jordan, and the bright inheritance is seen at hand. Then, as it is written, ‘the feet of them that bear the ark shall stand still;’ then the children of God may rest from their watchings and toils; and having past the dark river in whose swelling waters the grace of God shall bear them up, they shall go, every one to the place prepared for him from the foundation of the world.”

“Thus, are we instructed, from every quarter, that perpetual progress is essential to our safety, acceptance, and glory; that our path must be ‘as the rising light shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day:’ A solemn, an exciting, an admonitory, truth! God utters it in our ears from all the voices of his works. Scripture proclaims it to our souls in all its doctrines, commandments, and promises. A voice from the unseen world, declares it to all who aspire after future glory. Our understandings and consciences within speak assent to the declaration. And on the wings of the dying year, which are now sighing around us with their departing breath, the truth is sent home to our hearts in accents of fearful solemnity; warning us that we look back, before the light of another year shall open upon us, and see what improvement has been made of this. p. 13—17.

We cannot forbear quoting the closing passage.—

“Listen, I beseech you, to the admonitions of this solemn night. Lay not your heads upon your pillows, give no slumber to your eye lids, till you have devoted one hour to thought. I charge you, as in the presence of God, who sees and will judge you, in the name of Jesus Christ who beseeches you to come to him and live, by all your hopes of happiness and life, I charge you, let not this year die, and leave you impenitent. Do not dare to utter defiance on its decaying hours. But in the stillness of its awful midnight, prostrate yourselves penitently before your Maker, and let the morrow’s sun rise upon you, thoughtful and serious men, beginning a new life with the new year. And when this season shall again find you, as God grant it may! in the house of prayer, may it be as humble, rejoicing, improving christians.

"Brethren and Friends, may it find us *all* such! Alas! vain wish! For we cannot believe that it shall find us all among the living. The destroyer is abroad; wherever we go, he is lurking in our path, and we know not when he may strike us to the dust. We leave this house, and perchance shall never return within its sacred walls. We mingle in the concourse of the world, and come up again to this holy altar when the year has revolved; but there are some among us, for whom our eyes shall then look in vain. I saw the young, the healthful, the happy, worshipping here at our last celebration of the season—but they are not here now. They then heard the cry of the Prophet. *Prepare to meet thy God*—and they went away, and have been called to meet him in judgment.

"From the warning of that night, they were summoned to his presence. And from the warning of this, it is equally certain that some of us shall be summoned. Oh, that none may be taken unprepared! Oh, that God, would be pleased to spare the inconsiderate a little longer, that they may prepare themselves before they are summoned to depart!—But for those that are ready, let them go. If God call them in their ripeness, why should we wish to detain them? We may see them and enjoy them no more on earth; but they will not be lost to us. In that world, where years revolve not, and sin is unknown, and death never comes, there will be their home. There, if we will be faithful, we shall meet them again." p. 21—22.

Who can resist this fervid, earnest, exhortation? The whole soul of the preacher is enlisted in the holy cause. And this is Unitarianism; cold, soul-destroying Unitarianism! Let our faith no more be called cold, or heartless. It is not so. We have been—our professions have been, negligent and remiss; we have not sufficiently esteemed the high advantages we are favored with; but our faith—that faith, which supported the martyr Stephen, the intrepid Paul, and the lowly Jesus, through all their sufferings, and in their deaths,—that faith, which bore them above the things of time and sense, can be no cold or heartless doctrine, no scheme of man's device. The charge has been made on the profession, when it should have been on its professors.

Although the word Unitarian does not once occur in this discourse, it is strictly of a Unitarian Christian character. And we like it the better for this. It shows no appearance of sectarianism. We look for a time when the term shall be sunk in the grand, all-comprehensive one of CHRISTIAN, and when our theological differences, with all their bitterness of party feeling, and angry contention, shall only be matters of history, of surprise, and of regret.

This discourse urges man rightly to estimate the dignity of his own nature, to value his high descent as a spark of divinity, and his immortal destiny, as one of the spirits to be perfected here, and hereafter. These should ever be before his eyes, they should be his guide, his safeguard. It also shows the necessity of improvement, and his capability in working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. Although it rebukes with Christian sincerity, it also encourages; it chastens his high-blown consequence, yet shows the mighty importance and extent of his powers; and, with the earnestness of a zealous apostle, points the way to glory, honor and immortality.

Would that our pulpits were more generally occupied by such preaching! We are at present surrounded, and too much actuated by prejudice, and party feeling. Even we, Unitarians, relieved, as we hope we are, from the bitterness of polemic disputation, and esteeming all men as brethren, have not yet so learned Jesus, as that we can deal fairly and impartially with our opponents and their doctrines. There is yet too much of sectarian feeling, too much of the old Orthodox Presbyterian leaven alive amongst us. We have not yet cast off the old man, with his deeds, nor put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Surrounded by angry and contentious enemies, we have so far forgotten our high and holy vocation, as that we have learnt too much of them, and in answering their arguments, have caught their uncharitableness, and have repaid,—though perhaps with the wisdom of the serpent,—yet not with the meekness of the dove. Of late years this has in a degree subsided: But the tone of Unitarian preaching has been too much of this character. Our American brethren had the same opinion of us. They conceived that the Unitarian pulpits of Great Britain were chiefly occupied by sermons of a controversial caste, and that little heed was given to subjects of more devotional and practical a character.* It may be well if discourses such as this one, were more generally studied; and that our Ministers showed

* Vide Christian Examiner, Nov. 1830—On Unitarian Preaching.

the warm, vivifying spirit of Christ, rather than, for ever, to deal in controversy and polemics.

Religion and Theology are not the same; they are distinct. Theology is founded on facts, and deals only with absolute truth; it has to do with, and is addressed to, the understanding solely, and touches not the heart nor affections. Religion is a different thing; it has less to do with the understanding than with the feelings and affections. It seizes on every thing, simple, or sublime, that touches or elevates the heart: It comes home to the inmost revealings of man's soul, and fills it with joy, and peace, and hope.

In the view of religion, God is not the *necessary* being as shown in Theology; but he is viewed as the Father and Benefactor of all mankind.

In the view of religion, Christ is not the being about whom the wrangles and disputes of Theologians, during so many ages, have kept the world in hostility,—but the visible image of God, the being of love and tenderness, who has brought down to the comprehension of men, the excellence and goodness of Heaven; the Saviour and Friend, who lived a life of suffering and trial, and who died for us, in order that he might lead us to God. In religion, the future state is not the field of controversy, where learned men have contended so often in the dark; but the Mansion of our Father's house, where Jesus is gone to prepare a place for all his faithful followers, and where we shall be rewarded according to our works. Theology, however, is not to be neglected. An improved Theology is essential to an improved religion; yet too often is the latter forgotten, and men prefer the disputations of the schools, to the meek, and heart-searching doctrines of Christ and his Apostles.

We hope we shall not be misunderstood. We hope we shall not be accused of yielding too much to our antagonists, in this age of debate and controversy. We cannot, reasonably, be supposed to do so. Upholding, as we do, the great doctrines of Free Inquiry, and the right, and duty, of individual judgment, we think our people should be well-grounded in the hope that is in them, that they may always be able to give an answer with meekness and fear; but we do wish, that in leaving the Orthodox, we should leave behind us all that is

narrow, bigoted, or selfish. We do think, that men are formed for other purposes, than those of a polemic, or a controversialist. We look on them as adapted to live more in the future life, than in the present, and that other objects are of more importance than beating an antagonist in argument, or vanquishing an adversary on the debatable land of controversy. The plan adopted by Rev. Mr. Madge, at Essex-street Chapel, London, is one, we think, well adapted to these times. He preaches a discourse of a cheering practical character, and a few minutes after the usual service is concluded, he descends to the desk, and gives a lecture, of about twenty minutes duration, on the controverted points of Unitarianism.

In again recommending this animated and brilliant Discourse to our readers, we would also direct the attention of our Ministers to the plan of publication of the *Liberal Preacher*, that they in Dublin, and here, may judge whether, in their contemplated publication of Unitarian Sermons, the cheap and expeditious form of monthly delivery may not be the best adapted to our present circumstances. We think this of all others the easiest of accomplishment. Let the Unitarian Ministers of Ireland join, and each in his turn giving a sermon, let it be printed in a cheap, yet attractive manner, and we have no doubt that such a publication would not only be eminently useful, but, after a short time, would amply repay the trouble and expense.

LETTER FROM A YOUNG LADY, TO THE REV.
DAVID WHYTE, WITH HIS REPLY.

Ardglass, November 8, 1828.

REV. SIR,—It is with some concern I take the liberty of writing to you, on a subject of such importance as the following:—being informed, a few months since, of the opinion you hold respecting our blessed Lord, as a lover of your soul, and also of the soul of each of your hearers, I felt it my duty to write to you, to request, you to embrace other opinions. To be candid with you

I must tell you, that if you do not believe the Son equal with the Father, you never can see Heaven, to your comfort.

My dear friend, I trust you will pardon me for taking such a liberty with a person of your coat, but I assure you it gave me great uneasiness when I heard that a good number of your hearers left you in consequence of your creed. Since I first became acquainted with you I have esteemed you very highly, and am sincerely grieved to hear any thing of you that I believe the Most High is displeased with, therefore as I am enabled to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God, and as there is nothing so near my heart as the salvation of souls, I earnestly beseech you to give up your heart, without reserve, to God; and recollect you fill an office of the greatest importance, and you will certainly have the soul of each of your hearers to answer for at the bar of God. Perhaps you will be displeased with me for my frankness, but I felt I dare not answer it to my conscience to omit it, and I am sorry I did not follow the impression before this, however I hope it is not too late, and whether you are displeased with me or no, I would feel very thankful to you to answer this letter, and you may write in as sharp a manner to me as you think proper; I will receive it as a token of love.—I request a few lines as soon as you can make it convenient.

I am, Sir, your sincere friend,

A * * * N * * *.

THE following reply to the above letter would never have been laid before the public, only for the circumstance, that it has been said in different places, that the reply was harsh, and not written in such a spirit as should influence a minister of the Gospel. Let the reader now judge.

Dillon, 12th Nov. 1821.

My dear Miss ———,

I received a letter from you lately, written in the spirit of kindness and personal affection, which I wish to answer in the same spirit. However weak and mistaken you may be, I give you credit for *sincerity* and *good intention*; and I hope I shall not ever be insensible to such valuable qualities in this world of selfishness and hypocrisy.

Your anxiety on my account, I perceive, arises from two sources : first, for my temporal, and secondly for my spiritual welfare ; on both of which heads, I shall endeavour to make your mind easy.

“ You have heard, you state, “ that I have lost a good number of hearers on account of my creed.” Now, if you were consistent with yourself, as you are so deeply “ concerned for men’s souls,” you would rejoice at this falling off in my congregation. As my opinions are damnable ; as you have said, that “ I shall never see Heaven, to my comfort,” while I hold these opinions ; and as you have reason to believe, that I preach to my people what I hold to be true ; you should only feel anxious for their safety, who remain with me ; and you should be glad to hear that, not only a *good* number, but that the *whole congregation* had withdrawn from me, their attendance and their support. But inconsistencies belong to human nature, and I will not press the argument: your personal affection and kind intentions are to me sufficient. Then, for your comfort, let me tell you, I have not lost a ‘good number of hearers ;’ I do not know that I have lost more than two or three families ; and these two or three, under circumstances little connected with my creed. They live at a great distance from the place of worship ; they were all in connexion with Methodism or Episcopacy. They were never regular hearers of mine. Though they received the sacraments at my hands, and seemed pleased with my form of administration, &c., and I was with them at every call of joy or sorrow in their families ; if they now decline calling on my services, I am not to suppose ’tis on account of my creed, which has always been the same. Whether they make *this* their apology for leaving me—for entirely giving up my connexion, I cannot say : but I know that in many cases men would rather give any apology than admit the truth. Now, the truth when fairly told here throws the blame entirely on them. I was chosen to be minister of Ballee as an antitrinitarian, and I remain such to this day. Time and study, and the Spirit’s teaching, have confirmed my views. I conceived all people knew what I was, as they must have heard such doctrine every sabbath, every child I baptized, and every sacrament I administered. They cannot say, therefore, that I disguised my opinions, and appeared under false colors. Were they

so ignorant as not to understand, or so indifferent as not to care whether they heard truth or falsehood? Have they only come to know what I preach, from my declaration at the last meeting of Synod? Or do they leave me, because I professed in a public assembly, what *they know* I have always believed and preached at home? These questions put all who are disposed *now* to leave me on the horns of a dilemma; and let them answer as they will, I will take that answer as my defence. To lose those that could be so *wilfully* ignorant—or those that could be so *indifferent* to the truth as it is in Jesus, or those that could be content with a minister that would *publicly* profess what he *privately* disbelieved—is not a loss much to be lamented. I am consoled for such a loss by the increased affection of those that remain. My friends are now tried in the balance, and I am better without those who were not friends on principles of truth and christian charity. I wish for no man to remain with me, who is not a friend on such principles. It has pleased God to cast my lot on a time and in a church, wherein my integrity is put to the test. I once thought that I might have steered my little bark down a smooth stream and reached the ocean of eternity in peace. That hope was fallacious. Even at the approach of old age I find waves to buffet and rocks to avoid of which I never dreamed at the beginning of my voyage. Popular applause sets in like a violent gale; the smiles of fortune shew in the offing like a treacherous light: yea, my companions in command would lord it over my conscientious judgment, and they that were bound to me by every kind office, would desert their post in time of need. But I find *that within me* which rises superior to such temporal difficulties. Let none of my friends fear that I may forfeit their esteem by truckling or unmanly conduct. Surely you—surely none of my friends could wish me to preach any doctrine which I *did not believe*, or keep back any opinion which I *did believe*, merely through fear of losing hearers, through covetousness for a little more stipend, or through the vanity of being called a *great preacher*, and followed by the fickle mob! Be assured, if I can gain Christ, these things move me nothing. The Synod of Ulster may, like an unnatural parent, expel me from her bosom, and “a good number,” nay, the whole of my congregation may desert me, still

I hope, I may say with my divine Master, "I am not alone—I have bread to eat ye know not of:" My trust is in him that hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And who has ever trusted in him and been disappointed?

On the second subject of your anxiety, I have not left myself room to say much. You have used the appalling language, "*I shall never see heaven to my comfort.*" Now this expression, I am inclined to believe, you have used from habit and not from reflection. Such phrases as we hear every day used by our preacher, &c., become like household words, to which the tongue is habituated, and we use them unconsciously. When you reflect on the obnoxious sentiment, you will, I am sure, be sorry that you used it. At another opportunity perhaps I may enter on a defence of my peculiar views of the relation subsisting among the persons of the Trinity. At present I conclude with stating my firm belief in the Apostles' Creed, my constant use of the Lord's Prayer, my sincere endeavour to keep the commandments, and in my public ministrations, my close imitation of our Lord's Sermon on the mount; and when I have done all, I feel how far short I am of the glory of God. I am an unprofitable servant before him, and depend entirely on the riches of his grace in Christ, for salvation. If with all this faith, and hope, and charity in heart and conduct, you still think, "*I shall not see heaven, to my comfort,*" I have only to hope you are mistaken; and that to your surprise, you may *there* meet with many whom you now think reprobates and heretics, as well as with yours truly, &c.,

D. WHYTE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—I have perused with much interest the Bible Christian for the last month, and being very willing to admit that your object is as Melancthon, from whom it contains a short letter, says that it should be, "solely to diffuse what you conceive to be just views of religi-

ous truth," I am induced to point out to you a few passages which particularly arrested my attention, and to solicit a kind reply to the questions I am about to put.

In the plea for consistency addressed to Unitarians, after calling upon them to think of the light in which Jesus Christ is viewed by them, and mentioning the graces and virtues which adorned his character, the writer remarks "far otherwise would it seem to us, did we see in Jesus the eternal, self-existent, infinite God;" and then almost immediately afterwards, he asks "is the example of our Saviour better imitated by us than by others?"

This passage brought to my recollection the declaration of Jehovah as recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, Isaiah, 43, 11, "I am the Lord and besides me there is *no Saviour*;" and the enquiry naturally suggested itself, why do *Unitarians* give the title *our Saviour*, to Jesus Christ?

In the summary of Unitarian principles, it is stated, No. 11, "we believe that Christ came to take away sin." Permit me to enquire, did he take away sin? How did he take it away?

The Rev. Mr. Montgomery, when proposing the third overture to the Remonstrant Synod lately held at Larne, is reported to have said "the malicious calumny that the Remonstrants deny the Lord that bought them, has resounded from one end of this Island to the other."

The denial of the Lord that bought them being a *malicious calumny*, I am led to infer that they do believe that the Lord Jesus Christ did buy them, and my enquiries are, how did he buy them? what was the price he paid? to whom was it paid? and whence the necessity of the purchase?

A learning teacher, in this same number of the Bible Christian, giving an account of his plans, remarks, page 398, "in our mode of operation, it was necessary to be explicit, and to effect this I have always encouraged moderate colloquial interchange of question and answer, suggestion and objection in the class."

I hope, therefore, you will excuse me if, in my earnest desire to ascertain as correctly as may be, the views of Unitarians, I have taken the liberty to submit to you, or if he please, to your correspondent

CURCELLEUS the preceding interesting and important passages and enquiries. I am fully persuaded that the answers will oblige and gratify not only myself, but many of your readers.

A CANDID ENQUIRER.

[The preceding communication *may* be from "A Candid Inquirer," or a cavilling opponent; but, in either case, it merits, and shall receive a reply, from CURCELLEUS, or one of the EDITORS.]

WHY ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

BECAUSE, told that God has revealed his will to his creatures, I have examined, by the aid of the reason with which my Maker has blessed me, the evidences which attest that Revelation, and, from the examination, am convinced that the Gospel has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter. It is not merely that I was born in a Christian land, and have been instructed by Christian parents, and have been taught to read my Bible from my infancy, and know that the wise and good, the greatest and best of my countrymen—Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Milton—were Christians also, that I cling to the Christian faith. Were these the causes of my profession, I should be in fact only a believer in these men, and the slave to their authority, not a follower and disciple of Jesus. It is because my understanding has been convinced of its truth, and my heart has been impressed by its loveliness, that I acknowledge with joy and gratitude "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

WHY ARE YOU A PROTESTANT?

BECAUSE Jesus has taught me, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so amongst you." "My kingdom is not of this world." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Bible, therefore, is my charter of right and of freedom. That is my freehold of rejoicing—my warrant of emancipation from the authority of "lords many." The Bible, and the Bible only, contains my religion. Any other power claiming obedience in matters of faith, is an infringement on my Bible rights—is a usurpation of the throne of God. I, therefore, protest against it. Be it demanded by the Pope of Rome, or any other individual, or church, or assembly, it is Antichrist, and ought to be resisted by the freeman of the Lord. Under whatever title it may pass current in the world, of it I ask, "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke on the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

The Saviour inquires, "Why even of your own selves judge ye not that which is right?" The Saviour commands, "Search the Scriptures." His Apostle exhorts, "In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

Act up to these requirements, and to you will similar praise be awarded as to the Bereans of old ; " These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, if those things were so." But remember the fate of him who hid the talent of the Lord in the earth, if you despise, or are indifferent to those admonitions.

"To the law and the testimony, if we speak not according to which, the truth is not in us." Search ye, from Genesis to the Revelation, and see if you can find on the sacred page, the words Trinity, Triune God, God-Man, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, Threefold Deity. Call to mind the language of John Calvin, " I like not this prayer, ' O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity ; ' the word Trinity is barbarous, insipid, profane, the popish God, unknown to Jesus Christ and his Apostles : it were better to call Almighty God—God, than Trinity."

Search ye, yet again, and see if these be not the doctrines of the cross :—" Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. There is but One God, the Father. One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. In him we live, and move, and have our being. This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, in that day ye shall ask me nothing, but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.—That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.—Then cometh the end when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, and authority, and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, who did put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

These are considered by a numerous and increasing class of Christians, to be the teachings of that Holy Scripture, which maketh wise unto eternal life. The doctrines and views sketched in this paper, constitute the principles of Christian Unitarianism. Its believers have no wish to impose their principles—holy, and benevolent,

and true, as they deem them—on their fellow-creatures. They love freedom of conscience too well to attempt to fetter it, even to what they glory in professing. All they wish, is inquiry. All they pray for, is light and truth, and virtue, and charity. They think no worse of any man, whatever be the faith he has adopted. In equity, they ask to be judged by the same rule themselves. To his own Master, every man must stand or fall. But feeling the cheering and sanctifying influence of the doctrines they have embraced, they would not discharge their duty, did they not call on their brethren to examine them, each for himself. They earnestly re-echo the sentiment of their Lord and Saviour, “Search the Scriptures.” They beseech them to disdain all shackles on the free exercise of thought. They say to them, Fellow-expectants of immortality, never be guilty of the folly—the pusillanimity—the wickedness, of giving up your souls to another’s keeping; of subscribing “slave” at another’s bidding; of virtually exclaiming to your minds, Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther. Say this, and practise the saying, to your passions; but debase not your understandings, degrade not the image of God, by bowing your understandings to its command. May the blessing of God accompany you, whilst you read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, the things pertaining to religion and to conscience.—Think!

H.

Intelligence.

RECOGNITION OF THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER, BY GOVERNMENT.

WE shall neither fatigue ourselves nor annoy our readers, by entering into a detail of the injuries inflicted by the General Synod of Ulster, upon their Remonstrant brethren. It may be necessary, however, to state, that by the original arrangements with Government, on the subject of *The Royal Bounty*, the signature of the Moderator of the General Synod was requisite to authenticate the memorial of every newly-ordained Minister, in order to his being placed by *The Lord Lieutenant*, in receipt of *The Bounty*. When the Remonstrants separated from the General Synod, after repeated assurances of kind and equitable treatment, they made the following just and reasonable demand.

“We require our brethren of the Synod to declare, that, on our ordaining a Minister in any Congregation now in existence, or which may be hereafter erected, their Moderator shall, in all such cases,

annex his signature, in the usual manner, to the Memorial for the Royal Bounty forwarded to him by such Minister: and shall, on no account whatever, withhold his signature, when regularly certified, of such ordination."

This simple act of common justice was peremptorily *refused* by the General Synod, after the Remonstrants had retired from amongst them, under repeated pledges and assurances, that all their privileges and interests should be respected and secured. Nay, parties were excited, wherever it was possible, in their congregations, by the most disingenuous artifices; and were told, that by adhering to the General Synod, they would obtain *the entire Bounty!* Under these galling and afflictive circumstances, no alternative was left but an application to Government, "to receive the signature of the Moderator of the Remonstrant Synod, as equivalent to that of the Moderator of the General Synod, in all applications for Royal Bounty." Thanks to an enlightened and equitable Administration, their just claims were deliberately considered, and their request granted, as the following important document will prove:—

"Irish Office, London, 10th Nov., 1831.

"SIR,—I have received the Lord Lieutenant's directions to acquaint you, that his Excellency will sanction the arrangement you proposed, by which the communications between the Government and the Remonstrant Synod will, in future, be received through their own Moderator. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"E. G. STANLEY.

"The Rev. H. Montgomery."

Thus, the Remonstrants are placed on a footing of perfect equality with the General Synod, as to independence, and the entire security of all their civil rights. No dishonest, persecuting wretch, will hereafter venture to say, "that if but *one* individual of any Remonstrant congregation should adhere to the General Synod, he should consider himself entitled to the rights and privileges of the congregation!" The happy settlement of this question is of the greatest consequence to the cause of religious liberty, in this country; and whilst the Remonstrants feel that they have only obtained the legal security of a *Just Right*, they will ever be deeply grate-

ful to that Government, through whose kind consideration, in the midst of weighty public cares, their minor interests have been so promptly recognized and secured.

ADDRESS FROM THE LADIES OF WARRENPOINT CONGREGATION, TO THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD.

[*The following genuine Production of a strong-minded, enlightened woman, signed by herself, and thirty other individuals of her own sex, distinguished by their good sense and social respectability, was presented to the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, at its late special Meeting. Mr. Arnold is the Minister, for the malignant persecution of whom, the last General Synod, "highly approved of the conduct of the Presbytery of Dromore." The Document is particularly valuable, as proceeding from that sex, whose hearts are the very sanctuary of Religion, but whose unsuspecting nature too often renders them an easy prey to every deluding artifice of mis-called Orthodoxy. The female mind, in England, has been largely disenthralled, from the fetters of unreasoning evangelicism; and in this country, the progress of the same glorious work, is truly gratifying. Many of the best informed, pious, and zealous Unitarians of our acquaintance, are Females, of various ranks in society. Indeed, Unitarianism is peculiarly a religion for the generous, the virtuous, and the humane.*

EDITORS.]

Warrenpoint, November 15th, 1831.

GENTLEMEN—Being informed that it is the intention of your Reverend Body, to hold a special meeting on the 16th instant, We, a part of the Unitarian Females connected with the congregation of Warrenpoint, gladly avail ourselves of this opportunity of conveying to you, our esteemed friends, the sentiments of gratitude and affection, with which your unwearied exertions, in our behalf, have inspired us. The distressing circumstances in which our once happy society have been placed, for the last three years, are well known to you all; the desolating hand of persecution, and the insidious tongue of calumny have been unsparing in their attacks, on an upright and most exemplary Minister, who had hitherto lived in the affections of his hearers, and whose mild and truly Christian disposition, shone most conspicuous in the darkest hour of his severe trials. We need not repeat the various grievances to which we have been subjected, through the active agency of men who have manifested more of the malignant cunning of the Serpent, than of the harmlessness of the Dove: Men, who under the specious character of Ministers of the Gospel, have sanctioned, nay encouraged, the commission of deeds, that would disgrace the darkest ages of barbarous superstition.

Beloved Friends, when we compare your characters and conduct with that of the unhappy persons just mentioned, our hearts exult with honest pride, and our hands are lifted up in gratitude to the Giver of all good, who has so graciously inspired you with so large a portion of Christian Fortitude, and unshaken integrity. We are well aware of the sacrifices you have made in the cause of truth

and we joyfully congratulate you, on the glorious reward which we foresee will ere long crown your labours, in the spread of those opinions, which we as Christian Unitarians believe to be the "Truth as it is in Jesus." Hope bids us look forward to the time as not far distant, when the sun of righteousness shall arise, and dispel with his warm and invigorating beams, the clouds of ignorance and superstition, which obscure the vision of too many of our brethren. Then will the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the face of the great deep; and then, should you be spared to witness it, you will have reason to rejoice that you were the humble instruments in His hands, of furthering the interests of His Son's Gospel. Should it please the Almighty to remove you to the world of spirits before these cheering visions are realized, your names will be revered by posterity, as the firm, the fearless, and the disinterested promoters of another and a brighter Reformation.

Brethren, our sex naturally precludes us from joining in your glorious efforts, to shake to its foundation the pernicious reign of bigotry and intolerance; but we have hearts to feel, and souls to admire your manly and upright conduct. We, therefore, bid you to be of good cheer; to go forth in the strength of the Lord, conquering and to conquer, attended by the blessing of the One only living and true God, and the prayers of your grateful people. "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight."

While we desire to express our heart-felt thanks to you, as a Body, for the support and protection you have afforded us, we would particularly acknowledge our obligations to our untiring Friends, the Reverend Messieurs Lunn, Mitchell, Davis, and Nelson, who fearlessly braved the united horrors of cold, hunger, and the threatened vengeance of an infuriated mob, to secure to our excellent Minister and his little peaceable flock, the quiet possession of their rights. Words are too feeble to convey to you, our kind Friends, the warm feelings of gratitude we entertain towards you; your names are written on the tablets of our memories, never to be erased while reason holds her sway; and it is our earnest desire that they may also be inserted "in the Lamb's book of Life." Had it not been for your generous exertions, we would have been scattered like sheep without a shepherd, and our amiable and beloved Pastor, in the evening of his days, cast on the mercy of an un pitying world.—Gentlemen, we beg leave to assure you of our entire confidence in your integrity, and of our own firm determination of "Standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Delivered by you from the trammels of a domineering Priesthood, we will not bend our necks to the yoke of fallible creatures like ourselves; but taking the sacred volume for our guide in matters of Faith and practice, we will "search the scriptures" for ourselves, believing that they only "are able to make us wise unto salvation."

Brethren, receive our fervent wishes for your welfare in time and eternity. May the wisdom that cometh down from above direct your councils, and may Almighty God prosper your undertakings.

Signed, &c. &c.

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VOL. III.

[FOR THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

ESAU AND JACOB*.

AMONG the distinguished characters of the primeval ages, Esau is in danger of being overlooked. The manner in which he is introduced to our acquaintance, as "a cunning hunter, a man of the field," does not, indeed, excite any exalted expectations; and the first event in his life, that "he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage," has branded him with proverbial infamy, and incurable contempt. As his posterity for many generations made an obscure figure in history, his personal failings are not relieved by the glory of his descendants; and when the Edomites began to act a more conspicuous part on the theatre of human life, their progenitor is already forgotten.

Esau, however, is not an exception to the general character of Scriptural History, as an instructive display of human nature; but like the other personages of those early times, contributes to our edification both by his virtues and his faults. His amiable qualities were strong and warm natural affection, and open, frank, and unsuspecting generosity. His faults were, indifference to futurity; neglect of distant substantial interest, when it came in competition with present transitory gratification, and violent resentments. The consistency of this, and other characters in sacred writ, equally evinces the truth of history, and the immutable uniformity of human nature; and these characteristics of Esau will be best illustrated by a review of some circumstances in his life.

As Esau was candid, passionate, and imprudent, his brother Jacob, on the contrary, was artful, plausible, and circumspect; and as Esau was led, by his fondness for the chase, to spend much of his time abroad; so Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. His domestic

* For Isaac, see page 485.

manners endeared the insinuating Jacob to his mother : but "Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his venison." Though these were not very good grounds for parental partiality, they were sufficient, in conjunction with the characters of the two brothers, to operate as mainsprings in the conduct of this family ; and though Jacob was a witness to this failing in his parents, he afterwards gave way to it in a dangerous degree himself, in the case of Joseph. Such is the uniformity of human nature in every age ; and so little do we learn by experience.

Of these brothers, who were twins, Esau was the first-born, and to this circumstance was annexed a pre-eminence both in dignity and wealth. The elder brother was entitled to the Priesthood of the family, and to a double portion of his father's property. Some instances, however, occur, of a transfer of these privileges from an older to a younger brother, at the discretion of the father. Thus Jacob degraded Reuben, and of his grandchildren preferred Ephraim to Manasseh ; and David made Solomon his heir in the room of Adonijah, from partiality to his mother Bathsheba. As the prevalence of polygamy furnished frequent temptations to similar acts of injustice, in preferring the son of the younger wife ; such transfers of the birthright were strictly forbidden by the Mosaical Law. "If a man have two wives, the one beloved and the other hated, it shall be when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated, who is indeed the First Born.

To betray Isaac, already superannuated, into an error of this nature, a conspiracy was formed by Jacob and his mother, Rebekah. They first contrived to obtain the consent of Esau himself, and afterwards to deceive the Patriarch. To effect the former purpose, Jacob availed himself of his brother's sanguine and improvident temper, "Esau came from the field, and he was faint ; and Esau said to Jacob, feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint ; and Jacob said unto him, sell me this day thy birthright ; and Esau said, behold I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright be to me ? And Jacob said, swear to me this day ; and he swore unto him ; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob ; and Esau did eat and drink, and rose

up and went away, thoughtless of what he had done." Thus Esau despised his birthright.

This is one of the incidents in Esau's life, that are pregnant with instruction, particularly to the young. Through Impatience, Appetite and Passion, we barter, in every stage of life, our most substantial and durable interests for a mess of pottage. We laugh at children for exchanging some valuable or necessary article for a frivolous toy or a transient spectacle, without reflecting, that we ourselves act like children and Esau's throughout the whole of our lives.

What a fool, exclaims the youth, confident in his own wisdom, was this Esau! "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit will this birthright be unto me?" No man is at the point of death because he is tired hunting; nor can he hunt till he is at the point of death. 'Twas nothing but absurd and preposterous impatience; gross sensuality and gluttony that ailed him; and for a momentary gratification of appetite, he bartered honour, distinction, power and splendor, and became an outcast from his patrimony. Thus the young often prejudice themselves in the persons of others. The man already advanced in years who has survived the ardour and fire of youth, sagely remarks, that this is a lesson well deserving the attention of the young. What better than a mess of pottage are those frivolous amusements, those capricious fancies, those ardent passions, and licentious pleasures, for which they so often forfeit health and honour, fame and friendship, the esteem of their relations, the endearments of parental affection, and sometimes literally their birthright! How often do they sacrifice all these for the gratification of some idle passion, and persuade themselves, like Esau, that they are ready to die if their wishes be not complied with! As the youth laughs at the child, and the old censure the young, so the philosopher and divine with equal reason condemn the pursuits of the man of pleasure and the man of business; for what else are those baits, which are thrown out by the world to allure your men of pleasure, and at which they so eagerly bite, than a mess of pottage: and as to the worldly-minded man, he would often be a subject of ridicule to Esau himself. Esau ate and drank and enjoyed what he had so dearly bought, and then went away content and unrepining

at his foolish bargain: but the worldly-minded man often purchases at a dearer rate an enjoyment, that he cannot prevail upon himself to taste: and what is the price that they have both paid for their transitory and unsatisfactory pleasures? Beside their health, tranquillity, and good name, they too often forfeit their real birthright, their only durable inheritance, the everlasting happiness of their immortal souls. Their right to this inheritance, bequeathed to them by a solemn Testament, sealed by the Lord Jesus Christ, this building of God a house, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, this mansion, where their treasures may be securely lodged, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal: these fountains of pleasure which flow at the right hand of God for evermore they relinquish for a mess of pottage. "As Esau," (for this is the application of the story made by the author of Hebrews,) "As Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright: for ye know, how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, 'or for a change in his father's mind,' though he sought it carefully with tears."

These words refer to the conclusion of this plot, the circumstances of which are too numerous and too well known to be recited, when Esau, in the agony of his soul, "cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, Bless me, even me also, O my Father. Hast thou but one blessing? Bless me, even me also, O my father: and Esau again lift up his voice and wept." The next mess of pottage by which poor Esau was decoyed was cooked by himself, this was an imprudent marriage. It was the principle among the descendants of Abraham, to consider themselves as strangers and sojourners, and Canaan only as the land of their pilgrimage, in consequence of prophetic intimations of the high destiny, that awaited their family. In order, therefore, to preserve both their faith and their blood pure from contamination by their idolatrous neighbours, it was a law among them to take wives from their own relatives in Canaan, or to travel into Mesopotamia to form a connexion with the original stock. Jacob was a dutiful son, and partly to gratify his mother, partly to avoid the resentment of his brother, which he

so well deserved, he took a journey to Laban, Rebekah's brother, at Haran. Esau had, by this time, learned prudence by dear-bought experience. When, therefore, he perceived that when "Isaac blessed Jacob, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, then went Esau to Ishmael, the son of Abraham, and took his daughter to be his wife." This prudent determination, however, was not adopted till an advanced period of his life; for in his younger days he had married into two families of the Hittites, a Canaanitish tribe, "which was a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah;" and in particular a source of lasting uneasiness to his mother, for long after she exclaimed, "I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth. If, therefore, Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, what good shall my life do me." By this imprudent connexion, added to the causes already mentioned, aggravated perhaps by his personal appearance, he effectually lost the affection of his mother; "for Esau was a hairy man, but Jacob was a smooth man."

Matrimony is of all others the point on which the old and the young are most liable to disagree; and it may be truly said, that both are generally right and occasionally wrong. They are right in their principles, but erroneous in the application of them to particular cases. The young are right in conceiving, that they are the parties principally interested; but wrong in supposing, that they are the only persons concerned. Parents are justly persuaded, that they are deeply involved in affection, interest and duty; but they do not sufficiently advert to the superior interest that their children have in the transaction. Parents seldom claim more than a negative; and even this, young persons usually consider as an arbitrary prerogative. But which party is right or wrong depends on the circumstances of the case.

Parents are bound by natural affection to take care of their children's welfare as long as they live, and as far as in their power. They are entitled by their relation to them, and bound in duty to exercise foresight and control, as long as they are under their protection. They are also deeply interested in the connexions that they shall form; because they must materially

affect the party immediately concerned, with respect to whom they must feel a high degree of responsibility; and because they may essentially injure the honour, the peace, the union and prosperity of the whole family; and any heavy calamity that may befall the parties, must ultimately fall upon other members of the household, who have had no share in their imprudence. When, therefore, there is any gross immorality or infamy attached to the person, with whom the alliance is to be formed, or even to the family of which the party is a member, or such a degree of imprudence and poverty combined, as may be likely to entail any of these consequences upon their connexions, there can be no doubt that parents are warranted in exercising a high degree of authority. At the same time, if the parties themselves are innocent and not grossly imprudent, such authoritative interference should perhaps be abstained from, as much as possible. It should be considered how much their happiness is involved: what unhappy effects, in various ways, often attend such disappointments; and above all, how blind the wisest amongst us are with respect to futurity: how seldom any unhappy consequences flow from matrimony, when the parties are faithful, affectionate, and prudent; and how much more deeply we should regret any melancholy consequences, that should ensue on thwarting, than any inconveniences that could flow from gratifying an amiable and dutiful child.

Young people also should dispassionately reflect, that they are very ignorant of the world, and the character and circumstances of men; and that, at that particular period, of which we are speaking, they are least of all inclined to a calm consideration of such circumstances as may be essential to their future welfare. There may be many particulars, as to the health, reputation, manners, and situation, materially affecting happiness, known to their parents, of which they are ignorant, and to which they cannot be prevailed upon, at that moment, to pay any attention.

Parents, however, should gladly embrace the first favourable opportunity of concluding their course of parental duty and affection by the last and best gift in their power to bestow; and children should the more gratefully acknowledge this concluding instance of pa-

rental solicitude, because it often entails on the old age of their parents a diminution of those comforts both pecuniary and social, that become more and more necessary at that period of life.

On the whole, the best preventive against these misunderstandings and disappointments is mutual and unreserved confidence between parent and child. Let parents foresee, anticipate, and guide the affections of their children to proper objects, or at least divert them in time from dangerous and disreputable connexions; and let children ascertain the inclination and judgment of their parents before their affections are irretrievably engaged. These are the most reasonable principles and the best advice, that occur on this delicate subject, which could not be entirely overlooked, while treating of the story of Esau.

Shortly before Esau's marriage with the daughter of Ishmael, Jacob had taken a journey to Padanaram, to form a matrimonial connexion with his cousin Rachel, daughter of Laban, according to his father's desire. After spending fourteen years with his uncle, during which time they had mutually practised a system of deceit and imposition on each other, it was become necessary, from many considerations, to return to his father, now far advanced in years, particularly, lest he should lose the fruit of his first deception of his brother. The recollection of this artifice weighed heavily on his spirits, when he approached the place of his nativity. He could not have forgotten, that Esau, in the height of his resentment had said, "the days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. Is he not rightly called Jacob; for he hath supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright; and behold now, he hath taken away my blessing." He well knew also that to send him out of the way of Esau, was one principal reason why Rebekah planned his expedition to Mesopotamia. He had passed over Jordan with a staff, and now he was become two bands; his family, servants, and cattle, were so numerous, that they could hardly find subsistence in one place. After a suppliant message to his brother, and intelligence that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men, he began to despair of his own life, and the safety of his great charge. He would have been happy, if he

could preserve one half of his family and cattle ; and therefore divided his caravan into two bands, and said, " if Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other shall escape." Having offered up a fervent prayer to God, and selected several droves of cattle for presents to Esau, he sent them forward under the care of his servants ; for he said, " I will appease him with the present, that goeth before me ; and afterwards I will see his face : peradventure he will accept of me." He then drew up his company, so as to place his beloved wife and son in the rear ; and with a trembling heart and a guilty conscience, " he passed on before them, and bowed himself seven times to the ground, until he came near to his brother." But how must he have been surprized with the reception which he met with from the generous Esau : for he " ran to meet him and embraced him ; and fell on his neck ; and they wept : " but how different were the tears that they mingled !

Esau having inquired into the meaning of the droves that he had met, found that they were intended as a present. This at first he refused to accept ; but finding, that Jacob would consider his acceptance of it as a token of reconciliation and a pledge of safety, he took it. Esau said, " I have enough, my brother ; keep what thou hast unto thyself." And Jacob said, " nay, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand : for therefore have I seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God ; and thou wast pleased with me." Jacob, however, seems not yet to be perfectly at his ease in company with his brother ; for when Esau proposed, that they should travel together, Jacob excused himself, on account of the weakness of the women and children, and the fatigue of the cattle. He therefore proposed to follow him softly to Mount Seir, where Esau had fixed his abode. Esau then proposed to leave some of his people with him as guards and conductors ; but Jacob, who had no intention of seeing his brother again, civilly declined this proposal. " What needeth it ? Let me find grace in thy sight." Esau proceeded to Mount Seir, but Jacob halted at Succoth, and afterwards removed to Shalem, where he purchased a piece of land and erected an altar. The prophecy of Isaac, that Jacob should be Lord over Esau, was not fulfilled until the time of David, who brought his descendants, the Edomites, under subjection.

In fine, Esau was a generous, and affectionate, but an imprudent and passionate man. These mixed characters are often dangerous examples: for young men have neither discrimination to separate the evil from the good, nor calmness to weigh the respective merit and demerit of different qualities. His generosity was counter-balanced by a spirit of revenge; but his generosity was permanent, and his resentment like a flash of fire. His natural affection for his brother was counterpoised by disrespect to his parents in counteracting their views by his marriage with idolatrous strangers. But his friendship for his brother could not be abated by any degree of offence, even by those base arts which were so opposite, and so revolting to his own generous, artless and unsuspecting temper: while he retrieved, as far as in his power, his undutiful inattention to his parents. It is a pity, that a noble mind should be debased with any alloy; but if young men will imitate these mixed characters, let them reflect on this circumstance in the life of Esau; that his virtues were active and permanent; his faults transient in their nature, and abandoned before they became injurious, or even came into action. Let them select his meritorious actions for their imitation, and his failings for their warning; not as is often done, take credit for his virtues, while they only imitate his faults; and while they are generous to their friends, and affectionate to their relations, let them beware of selling their everlasting birth-right for a mess of pottage.

ERASMUS.

[Though ignorant of the authors of the two following articles, we heartily recommend the subject to which they advert, to the serious consideration of our friends in Belfast. They breathe a spirit and manifest a zeal, worthy of all commendation. The humbler classes, generally speaking, are the most sincere friends, both of liberty and truth, when sound principles are laid before them.]

EDITORS.

TO THE UNITARIANS OF BELFAST.

THE writer of the following remarks has long desired to find the objects they are intended to enforce, recommended by some more able advocate. Such not being the case, he is compelled to request the attention of his fellow christians to his suggestions.

In the "Orthodox" Presbyterian houses of worship in this town, there is accommodation for those who may

be unable to procure seats : in the Unitarian churches there is no provision of the kind ; the wealthy alone are admitted ; and with very few exceptions, the poor are certainly excluded by unavoidable necessity. This I consider, and many besides myself consider to be a disgrace, as well as a serious evil. Hence it is that our principles are so much confined to a certain class of society. And so long as this deficiency remains, we may expect the great mass of the community to continue ignorant of the religion we profess. If we be anxious that men shall know the truth, and to spread abroad a knowledge of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Deity, we must have the truth declared unto those who are fast bound in chains of ignorance. If we love the truth, let us endeavour to give it a fair chance for reception.

This is no time for affected delicacy : we must now cast it entirely aside. We have been upbraided with lukewarmness to the cause of Christ—let us prove that we have sincerely repented, and acknowledge the justice of the charge ; but let us, by earnest zeal in the cause of the gospel, put it out of the power of any man to renew the accusation. I trust I am not too presuming when I say, it becomes the ministers of our faith to renew their labours, to redouble their exertions ; and it also becomes their people, as a sacred duty to their God, and their fellow men, to cheer them onward, by a steady and united effort. It is incumbent on all who have the power, to be earnest in season, and out of season, in the overthrow of error, and the establishment of truth. If Unitarianism—the acknowledgment of One God and Father of all, and of Christ Jesus, whom he hath sent—be the doctrine of the gospel, a weighty condemnation must be the portion of all, who at the present crisis suffer the interests of their religion, the truth committed to them of God, to suffer from a spurious liberality.

No period has ever been more critical than the present. Orthodoxy is working silently on in her accustomed course, and vigorously employing her accustomed weapons. Though loud in her censures against the “slandrous illiberality” of the heretical brethren, she depends, in no slight degree upon her own wrathful denunciations—her fulminating anathemas against all, who

after serious enquiry, and earnest supplication to the Hearer of prayer, are compelled to reject the dogmas of every worldly teacher, for the distinct instructions of Jesus Christ. Earnest indeed, does it become all friends of truth, to be in the work that remaineth for them. Many, and subtle are the enemies to be encountered. From the young students of divinity, to their hoary-headed instructors in the religion of Calvin, all are at work, all are exercising their ingenuity in counteracting "the poison of Arianism," by the most approved antidotes. Would that we might imitate them more closely, and while avoiding their unworthy artifices, imbibe something of their proselytising spirit.

From a view of the present circumstances in which Unitarianism is placed, it must to all be evident, that if we desire to make the great body of the people acquainted with the truth; if we desire to relieve our own souls from the responsibility, we must not remain passive, when so many around are seduced from examining the word of God, by the misrepresentations, and the threatenings of their teachers. It is time that all who have been hitherto remiss in their exertions, should awake from their slumber. Those who have, ere this, laboured in the good cause, must redouble their efforts. A fair field is now presented for honourable exertion in the cause of truth. Let it not remain unimproved; but see that a defect so injurious as that of which we now speak, be speedily removed.

If accommodation, and ample accommodation for the humble classes, cannot be provided in your present houses of worship, let a building be erected for the purpose, or some fit place be procured, where religious instructions may be afforded. It has been said that we regard only the rich and great; we have been sneered at, as if we despised the communion of all save the members of the fashionable world, or of the better classes of society. I will not attempt to refute the calumny, but I confess I sincerely and deeply lament the circumstances whence it has originated. Let all who love their Saviour's name combine to remove this stain upon our character. Is it not shameful that no means are provided to spread the truth among the mass of the people? That, save in a narrow circle, men are positively debarred from hearing the truth

fairly stated? In such unhappy circumstances—when men are panting for a knowledge which their circumstances do not enable them to attain, how sacred an obligation must be imposed on every true servant of the Most High—on all who have themselves experienced the holy influence of their faith, to contribute, not alone from the means which God has given them, but also to lend their unceasing exertions, their entire personal influence for the removal of all present obstacles to the progress of Christianity? Let the command of Jesus be obeyed, as far as it rests with us. Praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his vineyard, may we earnestly support whatever measures may appear most effectual “FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.”

The preceding observations have been made with an humble desire to promote the interests of the truth. They are offered to the Unitarian Christians of Belfast, for their serious consideration, in the expectation, that an imperfect manner of recommending it may not unhappily divert their minds from the great object proposed. A.

SUGGESTIONS

Respecting an additional House for Unitarian Worship, in Belfast.

[TO THE EDITORS OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

GENTLEMEN,—There is one class of our fellow-townsmen to whom the opportunity of being initiated into what we consider a rational, ennobling, and scriptural system of Christianity is almost entirely refused—I mean the mechanics of Belfast. It is one glory of the religion of Jesus, that it is calculated for every-day business, and for the humblest walks of life; those walks to which his first converts belonged, and from which his apostles were selected. Accordingly, after enumerating many of the miracles attendant on the dispensation which he was commissioned to impart to mankind, our Saviour completes a fine climax with the clause, “and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.” There is, perhaps, no class of men more open to the reception of rational views on religious subjects, than that large and respectable one which is composed of humble shopkeepers and mecha-

nics. Much of their study is given to the records of our faith; one of their favourite occupations is theological discussion; and they are so far removed from the destructive influence of fashion, that they can afford to obey the dictates of conscience without the hazard of persecution, of losing caste, or otherwise injuring their worldly prospects. It is, I think, pretty apparent that, without a *third* Unitarian congregation, we can do comparatively nothing towards affording such individuals an opportunity of fully hearing, and calmly weighing our expositions of the Gospel. The pews in the First and Second Presbyterian Congregations are all engaged. Besides, the sums to be paid for seats in houses which are attended by persons of the highest station and greatest wealth, must bear such a proportion to the rank and opulence of their frequenters, as to put it completely out of the power of men dependent on their weekly labor for support, to spare out of their income such a sum as would procure themselves and their families a convenient place in such a house of worship.

I have, moreover, good reason for believing that there are many "*Bible Christians*," among the classes to which I allude; and it is assuredly very hard that there is no place in which they can, without great pecuniary sacrifice, worship God in the manner which they deem most accordant with just ideas of Him, his blessed Word, and their own position in the scale of creation. I would then suggest the propriety of erecting a *third* temple consecrated to the dissemination of Bible Christianity—and I will confine myself to the mere suggestion, convinced that if it has the importance which I attach to it, it will be taken up by persons every way competent to carry it into speedy and effectual realization.

I am, Gentlemen, your sincere friend,

M. M.

IGNORANCE AND ERROR.

THE merit of belief, and the demerit of unbelief, with the innocence or criminality of ignorance and error, have been of late, discussed with great clearness and accuracy on philosophical principles. In this paper

I purpose to inquire, how far those speculations are warranted by the Christian scriptures.

The most direct assertion on this subject is made by Paul—"I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief."—1. Tim. i. 13. By this we are encouraged to hope that ignorance and unbelief may be pleaded in extenuation of our sins, an assurance most consolatory to sinful and ignorant mortals; an assurance, however, which should be applied with caution; for we are not only sinful and ignorant, but also partial and presumptuous. It will lead us into a fatal error, if we flatter ourselves, that all our opinions and failings may be justified by the plea of ignorance and unbelief. But, though it affords no encouragement for such self-delusion, it surely authorizes us to hope for pardon of our involuntary errors, and most strongly enforces lenity on our part in judging of the faults and errors of our brethren; yet this very ignorance and unbelief have furnished the principal pretexts for invoking the vengeance of heaven upon sincere and humble Christians.

Now these are the precise reasons why Paul obtained mercy from God. He obtained mercy, not only *although* he acted ignorantly and in unbelief; but *because* he was ignorant of the nature and consequences of his conduct; and because he did not believe in the Son of God. This was not only an apology for what he did, but a justification of it in the sight of God, whatever may be thought of his ignorance and infidelity by men. It is not meant, however, that these formed a justification of any cruelty and injustice that he may have committed in persecuting the Christians, but only, that invincible ignorance and unbelief relieved him from any blame in his opposition to the followers of Jesus. That he was in this state of ignorance and unbelief, we have reason to believe; for he was a young man, when he witnessed the stoning of Stephen; and it does not appear that he had any intercourse with our Lord or his apostles prior to his conversion.

Invincible ignorance resembles incurable blindness; and it would be as unreasonable to condemn the ignorant man for not knowing, as the blind man for not seeing. "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin." Agreeably to this we have many passages in Scripture, implying that such a person is not responsible for his

errors. The law of Moses is full of indulgent clauses in favour of ignorant transgressors. They are only directed to make an offering, as an acknowledgment of their error. Peter in his speech to the Jews, (Acts, iii. 17.) apologises even for the crucifixion of his Master, by saying—"and, now brethren, I wot, that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." The magnanimous and affecting intercession of our Lord for his persecutors—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," is founded on the same principle. An incident of the same kind is recorded by Xenophon. An eastern tyrant becoming jealous that his son was growing fonder of the preceptors to whom he had entrusted him, than of himself, ordered the philosopher to be put to death. As he was leading to execution, he addressed his pupil in these words—"I entreat you, not to harbour any resentment against your father on my account, for he knows not what he is doing:" implying that the king was so insensible to right and wrong, as not to feel that he was acting with cruelty and injustice. Whatever others may think, I feel pleasure in reflecting on those gleams of divine light, which break in, even on men, living in the gloom of Heathen darkness.* St. Paul felt no jealousy on this score when he quoted a line which occurs in Aratus and other poets, in his address to the court of Areopagus—"as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring."—Acts xvii.

It is not, however, every kind of ignorance, that may be pleaded in excuse for sin. If we purposely, "shut our eyes, and stop our ears, lest we should see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and be converted," woe be unto us. If through indolence, idleness, love of pleasure, or indulgence in any sinful and unrighteous pur-

* Sir William Jones quotes an Indian couplet, written 300 years before the Christian era, which pronounces the duty of a good man, even in the moment of his destruction, to consist not only in forgiving, but even in a desire of benefiting his destroyer; as the sandal-tree, in the instant of its overthrow, sheds perfume on the axe which fells it; and the verse of Sadi, who represents a return of good for good as a slight reciprocity, but says to the virtuous man, "Confer benefits on him who has injured thee."—vol. 3, p. 243. See also Bible Christian, vol. 2, p. 536, for similar examples. That St. Paul did not consider an acquaintance with Greek poetry derogatory to his apostolic character, appears by an hexameter line from Epimenides or Challymichus, in Titus i. 12, on the character of the Cretans.

suits, we neglect or decline to attend to the means provided for our instruction, in vain shall we urge as an apology what is, in fact, an aggravation of our guilt. The Heathen nations were without excuse, because, though the invisible nature of God was made known by his works, they did not avail themselves of these opportunities, but with all their wisdom and philosophy, they "knew him not, neither worshipped him; but turned aside to dumb idols;" but they were not culpable for not worshipping him according to the Jewish ritual, nor agreeably to the gospel, till it was made known to them. The same may be said of many countries at the present day; but we who have "Moses and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles" in our hands, and "preached to us every Lord's day," are deeply criminal, if we do not employ our utmost diligence, to acquire the knowledge of the truth; if we neglect these sacred records altogether, or through thoughtlessness and indifference take up false, erroneous, and pernicious notions concerning them; or if, having adopted these errors, we do not keep our minds open to conviction, and search the Scriptures daily, to know, whether our first opinions were founded in right reason, and a just interpretation of the sacred volume.

In fact, with us ignorance is seldom innocent. It may be pardonable and obtain mercy; but is rarely free from blame; because, though we cannot attain to all knowledge, we may to some; though we may fall into error, we have many opportunities of correcting our erroneous impressions; though we may not be informed of the whole will of God, we may of ourselves do what is right. Therefore, our Lord says, that the servant, who knew not his Lord's will, and did things worthy of stripes, was still punished, but with few stripes.

It is a miserable species of sophistry, to pretend to cloak our guilt under our ignorance, for such wilful delusion would be sinful in itself, and would augment instead of extenuating our sin. Christ, indeed, says, "if I had not spoken unto you, ye would have no sin;" that is, as to those truths and duties, which could not be otherwise ascertained; "but now you have no cloak for your sins;" you cannot affect to hide it under your ignorance.

The ignorance for which our Saviour intercedes, and Paul obtained mercy, is now an object of persecution with those who are equally ignorant, and even more so, than those whom they persecute.

The other causes for which Paul was forgiven, and which has also been a principal object of persecution, is unbelief. "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." But neither does unbelief any more than ignorance, of every kind, justify us in expecting pardon: I have already said, that, like ignorance, it must be involuntary and invincible. Some, perhaps, may think this too strongly expressed in both cases, and possibly it may; but, in such statements, it is often expedient to employ brief, clear and strong expressions, without encumbering them with limitations and exceptions, which may be more seasonably explained afterwards. This is the manner of Scripture. I admit, then, that these words must be understood with some allowance for the infirmity of our nature. We may feel a tendency to wish, that a certain doctrine were, or were not true, or that a certain precept were not to be understood in its strictest sense; or that a certain indulgence may be taken in a wider latitude, without being absolutely debarred from hoping for mercy: but if we wilfully set ourselves against giving a fair consideration to any doctrine from an unwillingness to find it true; if we obstinately refuse to apply a commandment or reproof to our own case, lest it should oblige us to abandon some unbecoming propensity or vicious habit; or, if we stretch and strain an indulgent expression in Scripture, that it may include and countenance laxity of principle or behaviour, we cannot come with any confidence to the throne of Grace, to ask for forgiveness.

The reason why we shall receive more favour from God than man for the errors of our Faith, is because he knows, that our belief is not always nor commonly in our own power, and therefore, that our unbelief is often involuntary and invincible, when it appears otherwise to our fellows. If censorious people would candidly reflect on this subject, and look attentively into their own hearts; they might be of the same opinion, and consequently treat each other with tenderness. Christians are all of the same faith, though of different

opinions. Their faith is, a belief in the divine authority of our Lord. All other points are matters of opinion, on which they may differ without offence to God or man. But of this calm and impartial consideration few are capable. Hence arise bigotry, uncharitableness and persecution. Men can judge fairly, neither of themselves nor of others; and are therefore prone to impute the sentiments and actions of their neighbours to wilful prejudices and unworthy motives, and, on the other hand, to flatter themselves that they are perfectly free from malice and error.

These are the sins of the intolerant; who are too commonly the majority; but let us not imagine, that the liberal and persecuted part of society are pure and blameless. "Are there not with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God?" Do we not often take up our opinions upon slight consideration, and from partial views? Do we not too readily embrace, and obstinately adhere to them, merely because they have the semblance of liberality? Is our belief always the result of serious, dispassionate reflexion, or our unbelief involuntary and invincible? Do we not often dwell with pleasure and partiality upon some arguments, and reject, repel and misrepresent others without due regard to their merits, weight, or tendency?—If so, can we pretend, that our unbelief is either involuntary or invincible? If it be not, it is neither excusable, nor entitled to pardon.

Let it not be supposed, that, in any case, our ignorance or unbelief can give us any claim, in *justice*, to the forgiveness of Heaven. This cannot be said of our best actions. They are all tainted with a mixture of impurity and imperfection. Our intentions are seldom pure and simple. There is a combination of good and evil in every purpose which we form; and though our object be ever so innocent, it may be prosecuted by unworthy means. We may be diverted from the plain road, and stray into intricate, thorny, and miry paths. If this be true of our most virtuous conduct, how can ignorance and error, unbelief and rejection of the truth, be entitled to pardon and indulgence? How can we pretend, that we have availed ourselves of every opportunity of improving in knowledge, and been always on our guard against the seductions of error? How can

we presume, that we have given a fair and candid hearing to every argument in favour of Truth, and never stopped our ears against the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely? that we have never felt a bias to some flattering delusion, and hardened our hearts against an unwelcome truth? To this degree of candour and impartiality, of self-command and self-denial, no man is warranted to make pretension. Let not any man, much less any religious sect, church, or party, give way to this delusion; but rather be constantly on the watch against its inroads. This self-sufficiency begets pride, and prejudice, and ill-will, and antipathy, and bigotry, and uncharitableness, and persecution. Some may restrain these feelings; but, I fear, none can entirely repress them, especially in seasons of controversy and competition for popular favour. Some may justly pretend to greater liberality than others practice, and allow greater indulgence to the errors of their brethren; but none can behold all with equal complacency. Those who do so, have probably bartered their zeal for their benevolence, and given principle as the price of indifference. We seldom meet with men, who can agree to differ on any interesting question, especially in religion. It is observed by one, who knew the world well, that if two of the best friends dispute for ever so short a time, they-part worse friends than they met. Men are apt to usurp the privilege and language of the inspired apostle. If any one teach otherwise than *they* do, and consent not to *their* doctrine, they pronounce him to be proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words." As the opposite party will form a similar judgment of them, "hence comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth." I am sorry to observe that this description so much resembles the present state of society.

Let us now wind up the thread of this argument. If Paul obtained mercy on account of his ignorance, let us hope for pardon for ours, and grant it to our brethren on account of theirs. If such grievous offences as his were forgiven, let us also freely pardon the casual and trifling trespasses and the involuntary errors of our fellow sinners. If he was excused, because he

had no knowledge of the truth, let us allow our neighbours to think for themselves, and grant indulgence to their opinions on particular doctrines, how much soever they may differ from our own. If Christ not only forgave his persecutors, but pleaded for their pardon with his Father, because they knew not what they did, after all the gracious doctrine, holy example, benevolent acts, and mighty works, which they had witnessed; and allows us to pray for forgiveness only "*as we forgive those who trespass against us*, how can we refuse to pardon those, who have offended us, or who differ from us in matters of opinion and doubtful disputation," how can we presume to offer up that prayer on any other terms?—Luke xi. 4. "And forgive us our sins; *for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*" Their ignorance may not be involuntary, nor their unbelief invincible; but neither are we infallible, and free from negligence and voluntary error. If any pretend to be holy as Christ is holy, let them be merciful as God is merciful: if they confess themselves to be lost and perishing sinners, let them show compassion to their frail and sinful fellow Christians; and if any of us value ourselves on our liberality and our love for truth, let the liberality of our opinions be accompanied by charity in our judgments, and our love of truth with indulgence to error. Thus may we hope that the father of mercies will forgive us our trespasses, our ignorance, and our unbelief.

NEMO.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE EARLY CHURCHES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

SIR,—While you are engaged in successfully combating the arguments of bigotry and prejudice, in destroying the strong-holds of error, and in publishing to the world the sublimetruths of the blessed Gospel in all their original purity, stripped of the mysterious and appalling garb in which they have for centuries been arrayed, it may not be uninteresting to many of your readers to inquire, first,—what were the peculiar doctrines taught in the primitive ages of christianity, that is, posterior to the time of the apostles; and secondly, how it was

that the plain doctrines contained in the New Testament were at first corrupted from their native simplicity, and rendered so dark and intricate as they now appear to the great body of professing Christians? On these two points, the following quotations from Dr. Mosheim's justly celebrated history of the Christian church, may not prove uninteresting.

Before proceeding to cite them, however, I should, perhaps, make some apology, for occupying your pages with extracts from so well known a work as that to which I have referred. I therefore beg to state, that I do so for two reasons; first, because it is peculiarly important to notice the admissions of a man, who, himself a member of the Lutheran church, cannot be suspected of any tendency to favour Unitarian views of christianity; and secondly, because many, who carefully read your pages, have not an opportunity of becoming acquainted with that invaluable work.

That learned divine, when speaking of the doctrine of the Christian church during the second century, observes, that "the Christian system, as it was hitherto taught, preserved its native and beautiful simplicity, and was comprehended in a small number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines, than those that are contained in what is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*; and in the method of illustrating them, all vain subtleties, all mysterious researches, every thing that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided." Would to God, that such were the case in our day. But, alas! what a change have a few hundred years effected, even with respect to the interpretation of divine truth itself, which all declare to be immutable. How lamentable to think, that teachers, presumptuously styling themselves evangelical, instead of "avoiding every thing that is beyond the reach of common capacities," have so far deviated from the original spirit of Christianity, as to be continually twisting dark and mysterious meanings out of the plain words of Scripture. Here we have the testimony of a learned divine, who, though not a follower of Calvin, was sufficiently *Orthodox*, in the vulgar, though corrupt signification of that term, with respect to most of the doctrines which you, sir, feel bound to oppose: a testimony too, founded on the most authentic sources of information

that "the public teacher of Christianity," for at least one hundred years after the appearance of our Saviour, "inculcated *no other doctrines*, than those that are contained in what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed." The sum and substance of their doctrinal teaching was simply a belief in God the father Almighty, and his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, where he sitteth on the right hand of God, and from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. This, together with a simple unqualified belief in the existence of the Holy Ghost, and some propositions of minor importance, none of which any Christian ever denied, included all their fundamental articles of belief. They taught nothing of three necessarily distinct persons in the Godhead, each by himself essentially God, and yet when united constituting but one God—nothing of the unchangeable and eternal God, dying to appease the wrath of an infinitely merciful God—nothing of all mankind being subjected to the wrath and curse of God, and made "*justly* liable to all punishment in this world, and that which is to come," merely for the offence of one man, which too had been fore-ordained from all eternity—nothing of Christ dying in the room and stead of a select few, who were unchangeably designed for everlasting happiness, long before the creation of the world—nothing of all these, and many equally absurd propositions, which, according to modern divines, contain the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. How strange is this, that men, many of whom had heard our Saviour teach, had seen his miracles, and before whose eyes he had been crucified, should be so wofully remiss in the discharge of their duty, as to neglect to declare the very *first* and *vital principles* of the Christian system! What account, may I ask, will your Orthodox neighbours give of such conduct? Will it be alleged that these public teachers *failed* to declare the whole counsel of God? Undoubtedly this must have been the case, if such doctrines as those which I have mentioned, be really the doctrines of the Bible. But I think this would be a grievous charge to bring against men, who were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of Christ, and

many of whom actually did submit to the most extreme tortures, rather than renounce the faith once delivered to the saints. Or, will it be alledged that they believed in these doctrines themselves, but did not think them sufficiently important to be made known to the generality of their converts? Then why is so much weight attached to them *now*? Why are they now represented as containing the great end and object of Christ's mission and ministry? Surely it cannot be that the simple addition of a few hundred years could have so altered the nature or importance of divine truth?

Without making any further suppositions, however, the simple matter of fact is, that these public teachers knew nothing about such unscriptural and contradictory doctrines. They simply believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God; that is, according to their ideas of the phrase, as a messenger sent by God, in like manner as the prophets had been sent; but with this difference that he had received a larger share of power and authority to work miracles, and to enforce the doctrine which he taught, "for the Father gave not the spirit by measure unto him;" and also, that he was sent on a much more important errand, namely, to preach a pure system of morality, to publish the glorious doctrine of immortality, and to strengthen and confirm our hopes of eternal life by his resurrection from the dead. This was enough for them to know to induce them to obey his commandments. Content with the simple but glorious fact, that God had sent his well-beloved Son, "to turn them from darkness to light," and to deliver them from the power of death, satan, and the grave, they troubled not themselves with fruitless speculations about the nature of that messenger whom God had sent. This formed no part of their duty. Their sole object was to believe in his doctrine, to obey his precepts, and to follow his example, that by so doing they might render themselves fit for the enjoyment of the happiness which he had promised them: but never did they once engage in speculations about his divine and human nature, or about his equality, and sameness with his heavenly Father. No. Such an extraordinary notion never once entered into their thoughts. They tried not to pry into the hidden things of the Almighty, nor endeavoured to explain what God had thought proper to conceal; resting assured that all

which was necessary for them to know, had been clearly and explicitly revealed.

I might add many passages from the same author, illustrative of the same subject, and might prove from various historians, that the primitive professors of Christianity taught their converts none of those mysterious doctrines and self-contradictory dogmas, which its modern teachers inculcate upon the multitude, as containing the very essence of Gospel truth. Thus, when speaking of the doctrine of the Christian Church in the third century, the same writer observes:—"The principal doctrines of Christianity were now explained to the people in their native purity and simplicity, without any mixture of abstract reasonings or subtle inventions; nor were the feeble minds of the multitude loaded with a great variety of precepts." But, Sir, I think it unnecessary to occupy your pages with quotations in proof of a truth, which the most zealous supporters of *modern* Orthodoxy cannot deny: namely, that the peculiar doctrines taught in the primitive ages of Christianity were "no other than those that are contained in what is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*."

I come now to the second point of inquiry which I proposed, namely, "how it was that the plain doctrines contained in the New Testament were at first corrupted from their native simplicity, and rendered so dark and intricate as they now appear to the great body of professing Christians?" To this question, our author, though himself a Trinitarian, gives us an equally satisfactory solution. In the paragraph immediately following the passage which I quoted first, he writes: "This venerable simplicity was not, indeed, of a long duration—its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learning, and the dark subtleties of imaginary science. Acute researches were employed upon several religious subjects, concerning which, ingenious decisions were pronounced, and which was worst of all, *several tenets of a chimerical philosophy were imprudently incorporated into the Christian system*." Here then, I presume, we have a cause sufficient to account for the rise and progress of that cloud of mysteries and mummeries, whether Roman Catholic or Calvinistic, which has obscured the glorious sun of divine truth during a period of nearly sixteen hundred years. This will

also solve the enigma of the introduction of a *Triune* God into the Christian system, and of ten thousand other absurdities, which have rendered it incredible to the Jew, and ridiculous to the infidel. It "was the eagerness of certain learned men to bring about a union between the doctrines of Christianity and the opinions of the philosophers,* that corrupted the beautiful simplicity of Gospel truth, and gave rise to that maze of intricacies and that host of contradictions, which the authority of "an infallible church" can alone support, and the height of superstition, ignorance, and credulity, can alone believe.

I need not stop to point out the leading characteristics of this "chimerical philosophy," nor need I occupy your pages with tracing out what peculiar additions the Christian system probably derived from heathenism. The most superficial reader of his Bible well knows that these ancient philosophers acknowledged "Gods many and Lords many;" and especially the Grecian sages, from whom Christian teachers seem to have borrowed most, are well known to have had a multitude of deities, insomuch, that the apostle Paul, when passing through the renowned Athens, found an altar even "to the *unknown God*." It is admitted, indeed, that these philosophers generally exalted one deity superior to the others; but they so confined his jurisdiction, by apportioning different parts of his government of the universe to other beings, in the same way as our modern Trinitarians, as to warrant us in asserting that they maintained a plurality of Gods. And when to this, we add their decisions with respect to the soul, and demons, &c., we will have little difficulty in accounting for the origin of those superstitions and absurdities, falsely called Christian, which have been entailed on the religion of Jesus; and in explaining how it was that the plain doctrines contained in the New Testament were at first corrupted from their native simplicity, and rendered so dark and intricate as they now appear to the great body of professing Christians.

Besides the single extract which I have given in answer to the latter query, there are many others of similar import, which, were it necessary, might be

quoted. Thus in speaking of the doctrine of the church in the third century, our author repeats nearly the same words; but with this addition, namely, that it was "the Platonic Philosophy," which those speculative theologians "set up as the test of all religion." Again, in speaking of the same subject in the fourth century, he observes,—“The fundamental principles of the Christian doctrine were preserved hitherto uncorrupted and entire in most churches, though it must be confessed, that they were often explained and defended in a manner that discovered the greatest ignorance and utter confusion of ideas. The disputes carried on in the Council of Nice, concerning the three persons in the Godhead, afford a remarkable instance of this, particularly in the language and explanations of *those who approved of the decisions of that council*. So little light, precision, and order, reigned in their discourses, that they appeared to substitute *three Gods in the place of one*.”

Reader, mark the admission of a Trinitarian. Remember that these men, who, through “the greatest ignorance, and utter confusion of ideas,” “appeared to substitute *three Gods in the place of one*,” were the very persons who condemned and banished Arius for his Unitarian opinions,—because, forsooth, he would not prostrate his conscience before the imperious dictum of a bishop of Alexandria.—and can you any longer doubt the *human* origin of that most wonderful of absurdities; namely, the *equality* and *oneness* of *three infinite beings*?

But, sir, lest the admissions of the Orthodox Mosheim now given, might not suffice to gratify the more credulous, permit me to trouble you with another, and then I will have done. When speaking of the Arian heresy, as he is pleased to designate it, he says,—“The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of *three persons in the Godhead*; a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas. The church, indeed, had *frequently decided* against the Sabellians and others, that there was a *real difference between the Father and the Son*, and that the Holy Ghost was distinct from them both.” Here, then, we

find that between the Father and the Son there existed "*a real difference*," during the first three centuries of the Church. How, then, did they afterwards become "*the same in substance, and equal in power and glory?*" Let Mosheim himself answer. "In Egypt and the adjacent countries, the greatest part embraced in this, as well as in other matters, the opinion of Origen, who held that the *Son* was *in God* that which *reason* is *in man*; and that the *Holy Ghost* was nothing more than a *divine energy*, or active force." In this sentiment, we find the first symptoms of a swerving from the primitive opinion of the church respecting "*a real difference*" between the Father and Son. This Origen, as our author elsewhere informs us, "was at the head of that speculative tribe," who endeavoured "to bring the doctrines of celestial wisdom into a certain subjection to the precepts of their philosophy." This may explain the cause of his deviation. But to proceed with our author's answer. In the next section he testifies thus,—"*In an assembly of the presbyters of Alexandria, the bishop of that city, whose name was Alexander, expressed his sentiments on this head with a high degree of freedom and confidence; and maintained, among other things, that the Son was not only of the same eminence and dignity, but also of the same essence with the Father.*" This was a second step towards modern Orthodoxy. And we have only to turn to the section immediately following, to find the first establishment of the *Triune* mystery. Here are the words of our witness:—"In this general council (the famous council of Nice,) after *many keen debates*, and *violent efforts* of the two parties, the doctrine of Arius was condemned; Christ declared *consubstantial*, or of the same essence with the Father; the vanquished Presbyter banished among the Illyrians, and their followers compelled to give their assent to the creed or confession of faith, which was composed by this council." This was the confirming seal to that doctrine, which formed but the prelude to a host of absurdities that sprung up and flourished during that long night of darkness from which we are as yet but beginning to emerge; and notwithstanding "the keen debates and violent efforts" with which it was established, and the human authority on which it was founded, which still continues to reign with almost unlimited authority over the minds of Christians.

Such is a condensed sketch of the account, which the famous Mosheim—a favourite authority with Trinitarians,—unwittingly gives of the rise and progress of at least the principal doctrine of that system of faith, which is looked upon as so venerable for its antiquity, which many have vainly imagined to find in or infer from the scriptures of truth, and a *belief* in which—no matter about the *practice*—is regarded as the only safe passport to everlasting happiness.

I might now proceed to give the same author's account of the origin of some other doctrines of that system; such as *the innate corruption and depravity of man, the natural inability of men to live according to the dictates of the divine law, the necessity of divine grace in order to salvation; election and predestination, &c.*; these being first spoken of only in the *fifth century*. But enough for the present. On the mass of evidence here adduced against Trinitarianism, by one of its friends, I offer no farther remark. Every reflecting mind will make its own comments. Enough, however, has been said to prove to the most unthinking, that the sneer levelled against Unitarians for their *new-light* views, is an unjust reproach; inasmuch as their system of faith is at least three hundred years older than that, which they feel bound in duty to oppose.

B. C. D.

EVIL EFFECTS OF IGNORANCE AND BIGOTRY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.]

DEAR SIR,—Among those who profess any concern for religion, bigotry may be defined to be *the prejudice of ignorance*. It exists, no doubt, in some vicious minds of better information; but its most general dwelling-place will be found in the habitations of comparative ignorance. And, as mental darkness, notwithstanding the light which has come into the world, is still very prevalent among the children of men; so, that prejudice which is its natural offspring will always be found to prevail in nearly the same proportion.

It may be observed, too, that where bigotry is not assumed, but genuine—where it is really the child of ignorance, its zeal and violence will be generally pro-

portioned to the degree of intellectual obscurity. And, like every other blind impulse, it is usually head-long and impetuous in its violence; and so far as it can, will furiously overturn every thing, right or wrong, that stands in its way. The simple truth, and the moral beauty of Christianity have suffered extremely by these causes, from the period of its first promulgation, to the present hour. The blindness and the bigotry of an ignorant world stood up in stern array against it, when it was first proposed. The mass of the people, excited by the base arts of the more intelligent and designing, and hurried on by the powerful impulse of a reckless prejudice, strained every nerve to crush it in its infancy. Even Paul himself, a man of comparative knowledge, and irreproachable character, was, previously to his becoming a Christian, persuaded that "he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" and thought that he must be doing God the most acceptable service, by aiming at the total extermination of the religion of Christ. Here was an example of genuine bigotry; or what I have termed the *prejudice of ignorance*: for when the same person attained to better information, when he came to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, he tells us himself that he had done these things under the head-long impulse of a blind bigotry; and that he had, upon repentance, obtained mercy of God, just because he had "done it ignorantly in unbelief." How many are there still acting under the same impulse, and blindly opposing themselves to the dissemination of the truth? for whom we should offer up the prayer of our Saviour, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But I have intimated that there is an *assumed* bigotry, and although this intimation may appear somewhat paradoxical, yet I am fully persuaded that there is such a thing. For what, let me ask, is that base hypocrisy which leads some—I wish I could not say many—to profess faith in a popular creed which they do not believe; and which, just because they have professed it, impels them to hold out at least the show of being more strenuous than others in its support, and more violent in attempting to suppress every thing that is opposed to it? This, I think, may be fairly denominated an *assumed* bigotry. And it is perhaps the basest principle

of action, and the most pernicious in its consequence both to the individual and to society, that it is possible to conceive. Genuine bigotry, the natural progeny of mental darkness, is low, is degrading, is pitiable; but in point of moral turpitude it bears no comparison with this. The one we may lament as a phrenzied idiot; the other we must eschew as a determined fiend. The one we behold, like the mole, darkling in the earth; the other we see, like Lucifer, falling from heaven. On the one we may and ought to bestow our compassion; of the other it is scarcely possible to think or to speak with any thing like Christian patience.

The evil effects of bigotry, whether it be real or counterfeit, upon the general state of the human mind, upon the great interests of truth, upon the blessed cause of Christianity in the world, have been wide-spreading, have been truly lamentable, in every period of the church. Let the Christian look back to the origin of his holy religion, and see the extreme difficulty with which, from this very cause, it had to struggle in the infancy of its existence! Let him reflect on the reception which the Son of God himself met with from that blind and bigoted generation, to whom he presented himself in the character of the Messiah—the anointed Ambassador of heaven. Many men of learning and religious knowledge among them, such as the rulers and chief-priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, from whom better things might have been expected in consequence of their acquaintance with the Old Testament prophecies; either participated in the obstinate prejudices of an ignorant people, or purposely fell in with them from interested and mercenary views. And thus, though Jesus of Nazareth came among them with the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and though he bore about with him the visible testimonials of his divine commission, yet see how few there were so free from the trammels of bigotry as to acknowledge even his claims, as a Teacher sent from God to shew unto men the way of salvation. He had a few faithful adherents who forsook all and followed him: but the great majority, the blind and prejudiced multitude, “received him not.” “He was despised and rejected of men.” He was more reviled and calumniated than any man. Contempt, persecution, defamation, were the constant

companions of his ministry. Even those who might have known and acted better were found to be his most inveterate enemies; and pursued him with every species of contumely and abuse, until at length they satisfied their malignity, and filled up the measure of their iniquity by putting him to an ignominious death: and for what? just for representing himself to be—what we all represent and believe him to be—the long expected Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world!

It fared little better with the single-minded, simple-hearted race who became the first believers in Christ, and the followers of his footsteps. They were few in number: they were defenceless and weak. Their enemies were numerous and had power in their hands. And accordingly the prejudice of ignorance and unbelief soon began to display itself towards the disciples in its own colours. After the death of their beloved master, they who continued true to his cause were speedily made to experience the resentment of an infidel world in every shape that cruelty could assume. And from the death of the proto-martyr Stephen, down to the banishment of John, who is supposed to have been the last survivor of the Apostles, it seems to have been with them but one continued scene of persecution after another. These sufferings of the first Christians in the cause of Christ, and for conscience sake, have been thus briefly but nervously sketched by the apostle to the Hebrews. "Some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy)—they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in caves of the earth."

Such were the grievous calamities which were inflicted on the primitive Christians generally, by the blind and furious bigotry of an ignorant age. And the same sacred historian has elsewhere given this moving description of the extreme privations and trials to which the Apostles of Christ in particular were subjected in

the exercise of their benevolent vocation. "I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were, appointed to death." (And indeed most of them came in the end to suffer a violent death in the cause of Christ.) "For we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake—we are weak—we are despised. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour, working with our own hands. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scourings of all things unto this day."

Whoever looks over the annals of the Church will find that similar difficulties, arising out of similar causes, have ever been, so far as circumstances would permit, closely attendant on the steps of many of the sincerest followers of Christ, down to the present time. It is true that the increasing light and liberty of this age, and the consequently improved spirit of legislation and civil government in our day, have put the maniac of religious intolerance into a strait-waistcoat; and if they have hitherto been unable to imbue him with a meekness of heart, have at least tied up his hands from doing all the mischief that he could desire. It is true, and we have much reason to bless God for it, that selfish and narrow-minded men, professing an extreme zeal for peculiar views of disputed theology, have it not now in their power, as they used to have, to chain down equally the limbs and the spirits of their fellows in ignominious thralldom—have it not now in their power, as they once had, to coerce the creed and the conscience of all around them, and to employ the axe, and the gibbet, and the faggot, as the ready and certain instruments either of conversion or death. The infuriated bigots of our time must feel themselves greatly hemmed in and hampered in the exercise of that power which belongs to the arm of flesh. But, if they cannot now employ the same sweeping measures in fulfilment of their favourite objects—if they cannot now take the same range in the gambols of their intolerance; it must be confessed they are sufficiently active within that sphere of mischief which is still open to them; that they have discovered themselves perfect adepts in the wielding of those weapons of reviling and calumny,

and defamation, which were employed against the Apostles and primitive Christians; and that they are nearly able to fulfil all their *benevolent* purposes by slander and backbiting, by obloquy and misrepresentation of every kind. If the wisest and best Christian in the community, if the most conscientious and exemplary minister of Christianity, but scruple to receive their crude and contradictory creed—if he dare to prefer the word of God before the commandments of men, immediately the cry of “heresy” is raised, and echoed, and rung from the designing tongue of the calumniator, to the alarmed ear of prejudice and ignorance. He is trumpeted forth as an Arian, a Socinian, an unbeliever, a Deist, an Atheist! These are awfully appalling terms to the minds of humble illiterate Christians, who are the more startled because they are not aware of the import—just as children are frightened by “raw-head and bloody-bones.” And it would be strange, indeed, if the mass of mankind would not fly from such things, as they would shun the contagion of pestilence, or the pit of perdition.

Thus it is that bigotry still answers her purpose, still accomplishes her end. If she cannot cut out the tongue of truth, she can easily, by a few talismanic sounds of defamation, stop the ear of ignorant prejudice. If she cannot imprison the body of the un-refuted heretic, she can thus do much towards fettering the mind of the unreflecting multitude. If she is prevented from kindling her fires, and burning out the heart of the supposed unbeliever, she can at least, through the medium of the vilest and most groundless obloquy, cause endless heart-burning and unchristian strife amongst those whose hearts and hopes were one.

The Remonstrant Presbyterians of Ulster will feel the full force of these observations; for they have been, in many particulars, realized upon themselves. Having been obliged, in vindication of our spiritual freedom, and in obedience to the dictates of Scripture and conscience, to reject the usurped authority of men in matters of faith, and to refuse subscription to a creed of human devising, which declares that “there are three Persons in one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;” having been, for these and similar reasons, forced to retire from a Church-connexion in

which they were no longer permitted to maintain the attitude of Christian men, the inalienable right of private judgment, and the indisputable supremacy of the Bible ; we have had, in consequence, to encounter every species of reviling and defamation, which the spirit of a most intolerant bigotry has been able to cast upon our principles and upon our name.

I am far from wishing it to be understood that all who profess to differ from us in theological views, have joined in this unhallowed outcry of calumny and defamation ; for I am persuaded that many such possess a spirit of Christian truth, integrity, and benevolence, which would not suffer them either deliberately to bear false witness against their neighbour, or even too easily to take up an ill report against him. At the same time it is too notorious to be denied, that one portion of the community has industriously circulated against us, and another as greedily received, the most foul and defamatory misrepresentations of our religious principles and views. The sneaking and hypocritical calumnies of the *Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick*, in Cork, so ably exposed and replied to in your last Number, are a moderate specimen of the obloquy which we have had to encounter. Even supposing that *his* charges against the Northern Unitarians,—of a total deficiency in Christian knowledge, piety, and virtue,—were as true as they are false, has he no fears that the curse of Ham might light upon him for uncovering the nakedness of his Fathers ? The calumniated Unitarians of the North have, in these respects, nothing to boast of. On the contrary, they know that they have much reason to humble themselves deeply before God, because of their manifold deficiencies ; but yet they can stand erect in the presence of their fellow-men, and do not fear a comparison in anything valuable with Mr. Kirkpatrick or his Trinitarian brethren.

Calumnies such as these, and worse than these, have been published, have been reiterated time after time, from the pulpit and from the press ; they have been proclaimed upon the house-tops by many who knew that they were false ; they have been handed round in the circles of private society ; they have been whispered in the ear in closets ; and no opportunity has been lost of strengthening the popular prejudice and exciting

the popular odium against us. Our theological opinions, though expressed in the words of Scripture, have been branded with the awful designation of "heresy;" they have been denounced as damnable error:—parents, who are anxious to have their children instructed in Christian truth, and to bring them up in the way they should go, have been taught to look with terror on what has been called our soul-destroying system. The Sunday-school where unsuspecting youth are encouraged to attend, in the hope of being early initiated in the simple but sublime theology of the Bible, has been converted into an engine for impressing the incongruous and self-contradictory creed of Athanasius, and of filling the young mind with a suspicion, a disrelish, a positive dread of the society, the conversation, and the religious views of those who believe, upon the authority of Scripture, that to us Christians, "there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ."

I have, myself, known the very "*Infant School*," which is designed to communicate the first rudiments of education, the simplest elements of knowledge, to the budding human intellect; I have known even that opportunity seized on, and eagerly employed, to create in the mere infant a prejudice against us, and to instill the unscriptural mystery of the Trinity into the minds of children scarce able to lisp the incongruous terms in which it was propounded! It is truly amazing, after all the zeal which has thus been expended in defaming us, and all the pains which have thus been taken to misrepresent and prejudice our cause—it is amazing that our distinguishing principles have been able hitherto to work their way as they have done. There is that about them which, to every genuine Bible Christian, will not fail to recommend their adoption. The positive progress which they have already made, through all this determined opposition, and notwithstanding so many insidious efforts, is a decided proof that there are many discerning and determined spirits in the community around us, who are not to be blinded or misled by the tricks and jugglery of the designing calumniator; and that our distinguishing principles, when impartially examined, and well understood, are found to be based upon the gospel of Christ.

I must not trespass too far upon your patience at once, but in a subsequent letter, with your permission, I design to review some of the heavy but groundless charges that have been preferred against us as a body. The public mind is now better prepared to look more coolly and dispassionately at the subject; and if I can but do justice to our sentiments, and defend them in a proper spirit, I may hope to render some service to the great cause of Christian truth and charity. Meanwhile, Mr. Editor, I am faithfully yours,

Newry,

JOHN MITCHEL.

RELIGION AT HOME.

ST. PAUL, in his epistle to Timothy, charges him to exhort the younger members of families, 'to learn to show piety at home,' as their first duty. He seems to have used the word 'piety' in a restricted sense—nearly as it was employed by ancient classical writers—to denote the duties of children to their parents. We are at liberty however so to enlarge its signification, as to comprehend, under 'piety at home,' all the duties which grow out of our various domestic relations. How highly the Apostle valued this kind of piety, may be inferred from the strong terms in which he recommended it. 'If any man,' said he, 'provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel;'—and with good reason; for, the want of practical goodness in the most intimate connexions of life, is of all wants the most disastrous to human happiness.

I fear it is the tendency of this age, to underrate that kind of religion, which consists in doing right in a natural and quiet way. There is an inordinate appetite for strong sensations and startling effects; and they who are much engaged in what is technically called 'the religious action of the period,' are apt to regard 'patient continuance in well-doing' as no better than 'mere morality.' Thus discredit is thrown upon what is lovely, excellent and useful beyond all estimation, because religion is associated in the mind with the idea of doing or experiencing some great thing—of being the agents of miraculous power abroad, or the subjects of miraculous power at home. When religion is understood to

consist in a burning excitement, or an eagerness to exert influence at the greatest possible distance, the commonplace pursuits of daily life do not seem to have dignity enough to be taken under its direction. Yet what can Christianity do for a man, better than to make him good in those very relations, which demand his chief care and duty? In what possible way can it minister to human virtue and happiness more largely, than by rendering us kind, gentle and faithful, in our domestic connexions?

It is not often that any great sacrifice, or any heroic act of duty, can be required of us. Common virtues are more frequently wanted, and therefore more valuable, than extraordinary ones. If religion has any power in our hearts, it must be manifested chiefly in our doing little things well. When a man separates his religion from his morality, making the former one thing and the latter another and a different thing, there is great danger that neither will be very good. It is a mischievous practice to classify our actions, and say—these are moral, and those are religious duties. All duties are religious ones. The most common concerns of domestic and social life, and all the pursuits of industry, in which a question of right and wrong may be raised, are equally matters of religious obligation. The labors of the kitchen, the nursery, the field, the counting-house and the workshop, are among the most important duties of religion; and unless we show our piety by acting well our part in our own immediate concerns—unless it make us amiable, diligent and faithful in our most intimate relations, we may be sure that there is something wrong in it. There may be but little glory, but there is a great deal of *merit*, and of *happiness* too, in ‘showing religion at home’—in that narrow circle of duty, which God has made the principal sphere of our action. This may be illustrated,

1. By considering home as *the best nursery of the christian virtues*. Our domestic relations are far more intimate, and have far greater influence on our characters, than any other. Every family is a little community, bound together by the tenderest and holiest sympathies. All its members must share deeply in each other's joys and sorrows; their hopes, fears and interests are the same. No distress or mortification can fall

upon one without affecting all. Each has an interest in the virtue and well-being of the rest; for here, as in the natural body, 'if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.' The pain which one member feels, thrills through the whole body; the vices of a son have often wrung to agony the heart of a parent; the infamy of a father has covered a whole family with overpowering shame and wretchedness.

This intimate union, or rather identity, of interests gives rise to many duties, out of which must grow habits of virtue. One of the best of these habits is that of generous self-control—not seeking our own gratification so much as the comfort of the domestic circle—'preferring one another in love.' As all the members of a family are dependent on each other for a large part of their comfort, each must be willing to sacrifice, not only his whims and caprices, but sometimes his reasonable wishes. How lovely and excellent is domestic affection, prompting unselfish and untiring exertions, and finding happiness while seeking only to bestow it! It is almost every moment in our power to comfort or to annoy those, with whom Providence has intimately associated our destiny. Disinterested and generous kindness at home, then, is a duty of the highest importance. An unworthy self-indulgence, or an inordinate care for our own petty conveniences, will occasion innumerable vexations. There are cases in which want of courtesy is want of virtue; harshness becomes a crime, when it wounds sensibility. Rude and ungentle manners, betraying a disregard to the feelings of others of the same household, will embitter the whole stream of family comfort; indolent neglect may dry up its sources; and more than all, a violent, sullen or peevish temper may bring unspeakable misery into the circle of domestic affection.

There is indeed no school like home for the discipline of the temper and the heart. Whether your position requires you to command or obey—to work with the hands or the mind—to give or to receive, you may always find occasion for forbearance and self-denial. There will be discipline for the temper, exercise for the generous sensibilities, practice and nutriment for every christian virtue. This field of action may seem too

narrow for a heated and ambitious zeal; but it is ample enough to give development and growth to our religious principles, if we use every occasion for cherishing a kind and disinterested spirit, a patient and tranquil temper, and a readiness to receive and impart happiness. These principles, so often called into action along with our best and tenderest affections, cannot fail to form habits of quiet, contented and beneficent virtue.

The christian character is never more likely to grow strong and healthful than in this perpetual round of obscure and unostentatious duties. Its virtues then are genuine and substantial; for they have not been practised to be 'seen of men;'—no one can be always a hypocrite at home. They are not forced up to a rapid, sickly growth by the heat of exterior excitement, and therefore ready to wither and perish in a lower temperature of the feelings, whenever that excitement is withdrawn. They are sound, vigorous, deep-seated in the habits of life.

There may be a great deal of zeal to make a parade with abroad; but there can be no piety that is worth any thing, unless we are willing to make it a blessing at home, by a patient and faithful fulfilment of noiseless and common-place duties. If we despise these as objects too humble for religion to notice, this life will afford us nothing better or even so good. The occasions for sublime virtue are rare; to most men they never occur at all. Christian principles will languish or die, if they are not habitually exercised in those little quiet duties which are always at hand. As human life is made up of a succession of moments, unimportant when considered singly, so character is formed by a long series of acts, insignificant perhaps in themselves, but as units in the sum of moral existence and germs of deep-rooted habit, they will influence our whole future destiny.

I would not be understood to recommend that kind of exclusive benevolence, which, like selfish charity, begins and ends at home. As social beings we have other and remoter relations, each of which imposes its own duties. All the kind affections are diffusive in their character; God has given us a sympathetic nature, that we may employ its powers and affections in receiving and communicating happiness. Home must not be a

sphere of repulsion. We may become thoroughly and inordinately selfish, by a too exclusive devotion to those whom we are in the habit of regarding as a portion of ourselves. We are not allowed to retire into lonely and unsocial existence, feeling none of the hidden ties by which all generous hearts are linked together, and sending abroad no thrilling affections to seek answering sympathies in other bosoms. By no means. Both happiness and virtue are promoted by a large and free communion of mind with mind, and of heart with heart. As social beings, we have social wants and social duties. But as our duties are more numerous, our obligations more intense, and our good offices more wanted in proportion as our connexions are the closer, I would endeavor to make home the centre and nursery of all kind affections and generous virtues; and let them flow out from this exhaustless fountain of good influences, whenever remoter objects call for their exercise. Home then has claims upon us, to which all other claims are by their own nature secondary. How important it is, that we should all be true to these sacred claims! If every individual would be faithful to these first duties which nature has prescribed, how few would be the demands for foreign aid and sympathy! How large a proportion of the whole of human misery is caused by those, who are, in some way or other, false to their domestic relations!

There is a great deal implied in 'making provision for our own.' Who are our own? All, certainly, to whom we are bound by ties of nature or affection. And what is this provision? Nothing less than happiness. It is not to provide for physical wants only; but for intellectual, moral, spiritual—all the wants of our imperishable nature, by the gratification of which happiness may be secured or misery averted. If it is our duty to provide bread for our families, it is no less our duty to provide every means of knowledge, virtue and comfort. This comfort we may promote by showing 'piety at home' in some of its most blessed fruits—diligence, good temper, kindness, a considerate and tender regard for every feeling which we may have power to wound or to soothe. How much of self-control, of disinterested affection and of deep religious sense of duty it requires, to be a goodfather, or mother, or husband, or wife, or son, or

brother ! Almost every grace and virtue under heaven is put forth in habitually showing 'piety at home.' Every step taken in this course of natural and tranquil duty is carrying ourselves, and perhaps others, towards the perfection and glory of our nature.

Though it was my main design to speak generally of the duties we owe each other in the domestic relations, I cannot leave unnoticed a particular obligation of parents to their children. Their influence qualifies them in a peculiar manner, to cultivate the minds and affections of the young immortals committed to their charge. Whether high or low, rich or poor, all are responsible for the religious instruction of their own. There is an education which no learning can give, and no wealth can buy—which nothing but parental affection can impart. None but parents can inspire children with the unbounded confidence necessary to make their influence complete. This, observes an eloquent writer, 'is a part of domestic education, which cannot be devolved on strangers, and which, if not performed by parents, is not performed at all. A religion of the head may be acquired elsewhere; but for the religion of the heart, the child must drink it in with the accents that flow from the parental heart, as they fall from the parental lips.' Sunday schools and other schools must not be regarded as substitutes for parental instruction and influence; but merely as aids and extraneous advantages. And let no parent suppose himself incapable of fulfilling this sacred duty. 'God never places beings in a relation to each other,' says Dr. Channing, 'without giving them strength to perform the duties arising from it. In all the arrangements we make for the improvement of children, we must be careful not to interfere with the natural connexions which God has established; but endeavour to aid and give effect to the influence of such connexions.' We must endeavour then to make home the nursery of early devotion.

This leads me to notice another branch of domestic duty, of such importance that it is often emphatically called 'family religion.' I mean habitual domestic worship. I fear this practice is not held in sufficient estimation. If we would accomplish the sublimest ends of existence, as spiritual and immortal beings—if we would fulfil the highest domestic duties with joy,

hope, and success—if we would keep our hearts open to the most blessed influences and consolations of religion, we shall seek communion with the Father of our spirits in the bosom of our families; and our filial and cheerful piety will heighten the joys of our lot, and take away the bitterness from the inevitable sorrows and disappointments of life. Let the sacred fire, once kindled on the domestic altar, never be quenched. Never let our children and domestics be left to suppose that God is for one day forgotten. Let them daily see that we place our confidence and hope in Him; that we seek protection under his sheltering providence; that we find our happiness in his service; that we feel his presence in our loneliness, and rejoice in our hours of devotion, when his spirit comes over our hearts in peace and in power. Let them see that we are faithful disciples of Jesus; and we may then teach their young affections to spread outward and upward from the circle of domestic love, and gather round the kind Saviour who took little children in his arms and blessed them. This is a duty of vast importance, not to ourselves only, but to our children, and even to remote generations, whom the breathings of a pious spirit may successively reach. Time will put no limits to its good influences; they will extend from age to age, and be fully known only in eternity.

II. Home is not only the nursery of life's best virtues, but, when these virtues are cherished, it is *the abode of its purest happiness*. The sum of human enjoyment is not to be measured by transient raptures resulting from powerful excitement. Violent emotions are never lasting; and I do not know that they are often desirable. If a man cannot find happiness enough to satisfy him in the tranquil and rational pleasures of home, he is not likely to meet with it anywhere. He may have a kind of enjoyment; but he will look in vain for peace in a life of feverish dissipation. His inordinate excitements will be succeeded by languor without the rest of the weary, and remorse without the hope of the penitent. He has launched upon a fluctuating ocean, now agitated by an inspiring breeze, now subsiding into a sluggish calm—not the tranquillity of reposing nature, but the fearful stillness which betokens the coming tempest and shipwreck.

In the home of virtuous life there is pleasure, pure, peaceful and satisfying. All that is dear in friendship or tender in affection, all that can interest our sympathies or awaken our sensibilities, is associated with the word 'home.' The happiness of the domestic fireside is unenvied, often unnoticed, because it is not ostentatious and imposing. It is felt in the deep silence of the soul, but is too delicate and sacred to be proclaimed and admired. There are joys and sorrows of the heart, with which 'the stranger intermeddleth not.'

This happiness, so pure, so tranquil, so dear, is accessible to all, who do not turn away from its living fountains in pursuit of coarser pleasure. It belongs to every heart which is rich in social virtues and affections. These may be taught to grow and cluster round our own loved home, and ripen into fruits to gladden and bless it. And they are not rare and exotic plants, reared with a toil and cost beyond their worth; they are spontaneous and everspringing products of the soil, blasted only by harsh, selfish and vicious passions. Every generous spirit has felt that there is something worth living for in the domestic scenes described by the poet; when the cares of the day are over, and labor is succeeded by repose, and books, conversation and the heart's best affections dispose us to find delight in

' Fireside enjoyments, home born happiness,
And all the comforts, which the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long, uninterrupted evening know.'

That which constitutes our chief and permanent happiness must reside in the heart; for we have no other possession beyond the reach of accident, disease, or age. The principal sources of human joy then are inward. By cultivating 'piety at home,' by learning to love its quiet duties and be contented with its tranquil pleasures, by cherishing all that is amiable and kind in our domestic nature, and all that is pure and lofty in spiritual affection, we can secure a happiness, purer, richer, more enduring than the promise of joyous youth—a happiness over which even time, and change, and death, have no power—lasting as eternity, for it belongs to an imperishable spirit; it is in harmony with the sublime joys of Heaven. And this enjoyment is not selfish. It is more blessed in giving than in receiving; for it con-

sists essentially in widening, deepening, and multiplying the channels, through which happiness flows upon others.

The quiet, unenvied pleasures of home, multiplied as they are, by sharing them with those whom we love, are to a great extent, independent of wealth and social distinctions. They depend on affections and virtues nourished in the bosom of domestic retirement; they are within the reach of every warm and feeling heart. The poor man's cottage and the labourer's hardships need not go unblest. Moral discipline may render even care and toil a change, rather than an interruption of their humble happiness. Severe afflictions cannot wholly destroy it; for it dwells in the depths of our moral nature.

Yet affliction, though it cannot wholly destroy the happiness which flows from domestic virtue, may for a time overshadow it. Sorrows and disappointments will invade the happiest abode; in every cup of earthly enjoyment the waters of bitterness are mingled. And it is well that it should be so. Our discipline requires it; we are not fit to bear a continual sun-light of joy. Something must be suffered, to remind us of the value of our blessings. Something is necessary to cherish our generous sympathies, to exercise our passive virtues, to teach us our dependance upon God, to raise our aspirations to a brighter and higher home. Grief then must come into every circle of affection, but the wounded spirit finds a sweet consolation in domestic sympathy; and how dear is this sympathy both in our joys and in our sorrows! In trouble it gives to religion peculiar efficacy, when the offering of kindred hearts goes up from the family altar. How powerful are the influences of domestic worship, when the flame of devotion, perhaps first lighted up in the retirement of one lonely spirit, spreads from heart to heart till all are animated by one soul, and breathe out one deep felt prayer to the Great Father, 'who placeth the solitary in families.'

These home feelings are strongest in our happiest hours; they enhance the power of faith and the joy of devotion. They belong to our nature in its purest state, and readily harmonize with our religious sensibilities, carrying those affections which have embraced and blessed our fellow-creatures on earth, upward

to the fountain of love, and giving us an evergrowing relish for all that is excellent in faith and virtue, and immortal hope. 'No eloquence,' says Doctor Dwight, 'no time, no labour is necessary to awaken these sympathetic emotions in those, who are accustomed to rejoice and mourn, to hope and fear, to weep and smile together. They are caught at once from eye to eye, and from heart to heart, and spread, instantaneously, with an electric influence, through all the endeared and happy circle. Who that wears the name of man, can be indifferent here? Must not the venerable character of the parents, the peculiar tenderness of the conjugal union, the affectionate intimacy of the filial and fraternal relations; must not the nearness of relations long existing, the interchange of kindness long continued, and the oneness of interests long cemented, all warm the heart, heighten the importance of every petition, and increase the fervor of every devotional effort? The world, perhaps, does not furnish a single prospect so beautiful, so lovely to the eye of virtuous contemplation, as a family thus assembled for their affectionate devotions. No priest, no minister is so venerable as a father; no congregation so dear and tenderly beloved, as a wife and children; and no oblations are offered with the same union, interest, and delight, as those of a pious and affectionate household.'

I must now dismiss the images of peace, joy, and holiness, which gather round the subject of 'piety at home.' I have considered a well regulated household as the nursery of man's best virtues, and the dwelling-place of his purest happiness. I have done it with the fullest conviction of the misery caused by the want of domestic kindness, or the desertion of domestic duty. How grievous is the mistake of those, who despise the quiet and constant pleasures of home, and perversely look for more thrilling sensations in some unworthy enjoyment abroad! And how great is the guilt of those, who neglect to make their home an agreeable residence; whose ill humour or ill management drives part of a family abroad—perhaps, to the haunts of sin, shame, and ruin—in search of that comfort, which dwells only in the asylum of domestic affection.

Let me then persuade all to cherish that piety, which will make their own homes the hallowed dwelling-place of virtue, love, and joy. Let the husband, the wife, the father, or the mother, solemnly reflect on the woe and ruin, which domestic misconduct has always brought into the bosom of a family. Let the vicious and wayward child look at the unutterable anguish he has caused, and say if he can coolly resolve to continue false to those sacred relations, which nature established and which God commands him to revere. Let every Christian, in short, consider how large a part of his duty centres in his own home, and consists in the practice of private virtues and the exercise of amiable affections—how much of the true dignity and happiness of our nature depends upon a faithful and untiring devotion to the domestic charities

M.

REV. DR. DRUMMOND'S ESSAY ON ORIGINAL SIN.

THIS Essay, fresh from the pen of the highly-gifted author, is no less striking in its title than convincing in its contents. It is entitled, *Original Sin, an Irrational and Unscriptural Fiction, Dishonoring God, and Demoralizing man*. The writer has very judiciously divided the contents into *nine sections*, and his plan is both useful and accommodating to the reader. We give it as our decided opinion, that this production will advance the cause of genuine religion, and that the day is not far distant when numbers will express their gratitude to Dr. Drummond, for having removed from their minds the confusion, which the prejudices of education and apologies for vice have engendered on this subject.

“ Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these, reciprocally, those again ! ”

From fifty-eight pages of so much beauty, argument, and criticism, we are at a loss to know what passage to select, for the pleasure and profit of our readers. We, therefore, earnestly recommend them to procure the work itself, with the least possible delay, as it ought to be in the possession of every rational and devout Christian.

THE GERM.

"FROM the dark catacombs of Egypt lying,
A grain of wheat has been removed with care,
And though a thousand years had passed, undying,
Sprouted, when touched by moisture, heat, and air.

Thus, in our souls, may many a germ lie shrouded,
Which never blooms in this dim world of woe,
Linked with decaying things—with darkness clouded—
Shut out from all that bids its beauties blow.

But when the change man shrinks from undergoing,
Has to that germ assigned its fitting place,
With what rich verdure shall its stem be glowing!
What glorious fruit its lofty boughs shall grace!"

 OBITUARY.

[We had the pleasure of being personally acquainted with the excellent woman, whose principles, feelings, and character, are so well portrayed in the following obituary notice. The bigots of the age are constantly in the habit of representing rational Christianity as cold, cheerless, and uninfluential. The very contrary, however, is the fact; and the blessed influence of vital religion, in the virtuous, cheerful life, and peaceful death of our departed friend, amply proves that those plain views of theology, which are most accordant with sound reason, are the best calculated to promote a dignified purity of conduct, and to secure peace at the last.]

DIED—On the 21st inst. at Stone House, near Dublin, the residence of John Barton, esq. in the 74th year of her age, Miss Elizabeth Plunket. She was niece to the late venerable Doctor Maclaine, of the Hague, and of the late Rev. Thomas Plunkett, Presbyterian minister of Strand-street, Dublin.

With the warmth of piety and benevolence of heart for which the former was celebrated, she united that intellectual endowment which seems to have been so largely an inheritance from the latter. It will afford satisfaction to those friends who at an earlier period of her life were acquainted with this admirable woman to know, that this union enabled her to bear with the serenest fortitude, and most pious resignation, a long and protracted illness, attended with severe suffering. Her delightfully animated conversational talents continued long after her illness had shut her out from all other friends than those whom constant intercourse had enabled best to appreciate her character, and to whom she was inexpressibly dear. Her cheerfulness of temper never forsook her, but seemed as, she

advanced in years, the grateful overflowings of her heart to God for his mercies, and of kindness and of love for her friends. Her piety was well grounded, ardent, elevated and sincere, and induced those religious principles which were free from any shade of sectarian intolerance. Her delight was to dwell on the mercies of God, and her perfect trust in him at all times—to Him alone she looked for support here, and to him, through the mediation of our Saviour Jesus Christ, for the hope of a blessed immortality. With all her faculties seeming to brighten as she advanced towards an escape from this mortal scene—with a perfect consciousness of the state she was in—with her heart filled with love and gratitude to all around her—her last hours were spent whispering the praises of the Almighty in the hymns with which a pious education had early stored her memory. Those who knew her in the enjoyments of early years, may learn that the greatest cheerfulness is not inconsistent with the sincerest piety; and those who have been blessed by witnessing such an example as the close of her life exhibited, will have learned that such entire resignation to the Divine will disarms death of its sting, and the grave of its victory.

At his house in the Falls, on the 29th of last month, HUGH HYNDMAN, Esq. in the 51st year of his age. He was carried off by a lingering illness, which he bore with singular fortitude, in the opening of a life of active usefulness and honour. Gifted with a sound judgment, he was a rational Christian and an honest man.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We had prepared an Address to our Readers, on the close of our Third Year's labours, and also for the opening of the New Year; but, having miscalculated our space and the length of several articles, we are reluctantly compelled to postpone its publication. Mr. S. TUCKER, "On the search after religious Truth," in our next. The "Expositions of Scripture," sent by our valued Cork correspondent, are under consideration. We are very loath to reject any thing coming from that city, where we have so many unflinching friends, whose intelligence, zeal, and integrity do honour to the Unitarian cause and name;—but we have doubts respecting some of the expositions, which may, perhaps, be removed on more minute examination.



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